

**THE MOTIVES, PATTERN AND FORM
OF
ANGLO-OTTOMAN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS
c. 1580-1661**

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THE MOTIVES, PATTERN AND FORM OF ANGLO-OTTOMAN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS c.1580-1661

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My thesis covers the period from the establishment of an English resident ambassador at the Ottoman capital of Constantinople to the renewal of the Capitulations after the Restoration of Charles II.

I establish how negotiations were conducted at the Ottoman 'Porte', where diplomacy depended on set forms of ceremony and presentation of official gifts. I explore the status of the ambassador in the eyes of both states.

I explore the bureaucracy of the Porte and the development of an administrative staff at the English embassy to meet this challenge. I examine the formal presentation of petitions and methods used by the English to speed up business. I explore the difficulties of communication with England, and the methods developed by the embassy to overcome obstacles of distance and interception and to maintain a record of business.

The main body of the thesis assesses negotiations at the Porte; how they were conducted, the motivations behind them and the effects on relations between the two states. I also explore pressures from England and the effect of the domestic Ottoman situation on negotiations.

The era in question was turbulent for both states. England vacillated between hostility and amity with Spain, while competing for trade supremacy in the Mediterranean. She extended her interests to Central and Eastern Europe in the struggle for protestant unity and a European balance of power.

All these areas touched Ottoman interests. Ottoman expansion was slowing down while state expenditure was increasing. This created problems of internal management making foreign commercial and political allies an important policy consideration. The realisation of their common interests made the English and the Ottomans uncomfortable but successful bed-fellows in a sophisticated diplomatic relationship which survived the remaining centuries of Ottoman rule.

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My study covers the period from the initial establishment of English representation at the Ottoman Porte with the capitulations of 1580 which established trading and diplomatic rights for English merchants, and the formal establishment of an embassy in 1583. I explore the development of the English embassy at Constantinople from its vulnerable first years through its growth in prestige during the 1620s and 1630s, to the zenith of its influence in the 1660s before the French began to dominate diplomatic business at the Porte.

I examine English policy at the Porte from its first tentative attempts to secure a strategic alliance against the Spanish with the Ottomans in the Mediterranean, through the Thirty Years War in which both Ottoman and English authorities found themselves reluctantly embroiled and the domestic troubles which both suffered in the 1640s, culminating with the execution of Ibrahim I in 1648 and Charles I in 1649. I conclude with the period of stabilization in the 1650s when the English authorities reasserted coherent policies at home and abroad during the Protectorate and the Restoration. This was mirrored by a stabilisation of the Ottoman Empire after the first of the Köprülü Grand Viziers took the reins of power in 1656 and reasserted central control over the provinces and over Ottoman vassals on the peripheries of Ottoman territory.

The thesis builds on work done on the English commercial expansion in the Levant and the commercial role of the embassy in the Constantinople. I seek to complement existing studies of particular embassies and personalities and to give a broader over-view of the development of Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic relations. I intend to open debate on the development of Ottoman foreign policy and the implementation of Ottoman diplomacy during the seventeenth century well before the Ottoman bureaucracy underwent the westernization which led to it being absorbed into the European diplomatic system during the late eighteenth century.

In the introductory chapters I explore the development of diplomacy during this period

to establish the different attitudes of the English governments who conducted a largely *ad hoc* diplomacy until the late sixteenth century when they began to open a few key residences abroad, and the Ottoman authorities who maintained a strictly non-reciprocal form of policy with western nations which lay outside the *Dar al-Islam* or Muslim lands. I discuss the question of the duality of the embassy at Constantinople as both a commercial agency and a state department and examine the potential for conflict between the controlling interests of the Crown and the Levant Company. In two chapters on the domestic situations in England and the Ottoman Empire I assess the priorities of policy and the domestic and financial constraints on an active foreign policy. Both the Ottoman Empire and the English sought to secure their own state through internal stability and external alliances. Both states faced the same problems of hostility from their neighbours, internal rebellion and the need to provide for growing government expenditure. However, England and the Ottoman Empire differed in the way they approached their problems and had different resources to help them carry their policies through. The most notable contrast was that the Ottomans possessed a growing standing army while England relied on ad hoc levies until Cromwell's new model army. These chapters are intended to open the subject to two audiences: the Ottomanist and the Early Modern European/English Historian, and to place the Anglo-Ottoman relationship within a broader diplomatic context.

I have divided the thesis into three parts, each exploring a different aspect of diplomatic relations between Whitehall and the Porte, centring on the role of the embassy at Constantinople. The opening of direct diplomatic relations with the Porte was the first sustained diplomatic contact the English had established with a non-Christian nation and formed the model for later diplomatic contacts with non-European nations. As a whole, my study contributes to an understanding of how England adapted to the non-reciprocal diplomacy of the Ottoman Porte and to the operation of diplomacy by a Christian nation in a non-Christian state. I also explore the development of English policy in the Mediterranean and place the Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic relationship in its European context.

In part one I examine the function of the etiquette system at the Ottoman Porte and assess the importance of protocol conventions and the extent to which they affected the status

of the ambassador and the progress of negotiations. I explore the status of western ambassadors within the Ottoman system and illustrate the adaptability and sophistication of the Porte's ceremonial system. I address the problem of the Porte's attitude to western states, recognising that there was ambiguity over whether such states were treated as representatives of tributary states or as honoured guests. I also explore the role which gift-giving, both official and unofficial, played in assessments of status and the complicated issue of diplomatic precedent, where western ambassadors attempted to assert their own concepts of status on the Ottoman system.

In a further chapter I demonstrate how the English ambassador fitted into the English Court system and contrast English diplomatic ceremonial with that of the Porte. I provide an outline of the development of the conflict between the Crown, which endorsed the ambassador, and the Levant Company, which paid for him, to resolve the question of whether the embassy in Constantinople was indeed an embassy in the true sense. In this chapter I also explore the position of the few quasi-official Ottoman representatives who attended the English Court despite the official non-reciprocal diplomatic stance of the Porte. I examine the ceremonial which was provided for them and illustrate how the English system adapted to deal with this new phenomenon. This first part does not stand in isolation from the sections dealing with actual negotiations at the Porte but I intend it to place the diplomatic representatives in the framework in which they operated and establish the principles of status through which they proceeded to negotiations.

In part two I consider the development of the administrative structure of the embassy in Constantinople. I include an assessment of both English and local staff, and attempt to resolve questions of the experience and efficiency of administrative personnel and of the ambassadors whom they served. I also explore the function of the embassy and establish the chains of command and channels of communication which the embassy involves. I explore the development of chancery practice during this period and give an outline of the Ottoman petition system through which all negotiations were initiated. I confront the problem of prompt authorization of documents and examine the use of a possible 'deputed Great Seal' by the embassy. The roles of Ottoman officials, especially the role of the Grand Vizier and the

developing role of the *Reisülküttab* (Chief Scribe to the Divan) in foreign affairs are also discussed. Finally, in this section I consider the problems of security and communications within the region and examines the importance of the English consular network. The purpose of this section is to build up a picture of the operation of the embassy on a day to day basis to from a background to the various negotiations discussed in the final section.

The final section forms the bulk of the thesis where I assess policy development in Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic relations. In the chapters of this section I explore the various types of negotiations conducted at the Porte by English ambassadors. Because the greater weight of accessible evidence is that of the English sources, the structure of the chapters is determined by English considerations and interests in the region. Nevertheless, I have made some attempt to balance this with Ottoman sources where possible.

In the first chapter in this section I deal with the nature of the capitulations, the grants of privileged status, by which the English communities were permitted to live and trade in the Ottoman Empire. I discuss the different interpretations placed upon these capitulations by the Porte, which viewed it as a unilateral grant given personally by the sultan, and by western ambassadors, who viewed it more as a bilateral agreement. I explore the ways in which the ambassador regulated the merchants and registered their contracts to provide legal protection for their commercial activities. I examine the advantages of the English Company structure over the more disconnected consular and commercial structures which the French and Venetian communities used. The English system simplified the chain of command from the English ambassador to the English merchant community and ensured that changes in commercial practice required to protect the merchants could be implemented rapidly. This made the English the most successful trading nation in the region. The Dutch, who did not gain independent status at the Porte until 1612 tried to emulate the English custom of using an officer of dual diplomatic and commercial status. They did so with some success in the early years of their residence at the Porte but failed to establish the embassy support team upon which the English used to such effect. This meant that Dutch success was completely dependent on the calibre of their agent which diminished from the late 1630s. In this chapter I also explore the cooperation and competition between the resident western ambassadors to

gain extra status and privileges for their communities.

In a further chapter I examine the different experiences of the English communities in Constantinople, Smyrna and Aleppo, and highlight the problems which English merchants encountered with local interpretations of and indifference to the Capitulations, thus contributing to the debate on the extent of central Ottoman control on the peripheries. I demonstrate that the English system of locally based consuls allowed minor disputes to be settled at a local level, with only major disputes involving infringements of English diplomatic privileges referred to the ambassador and presented to the Porte as the final court of appeal.

Moving out from the immediate protection of the merchant communities, I explore the development of policy in the Mediterranean zone in two chapters. The first examines the issues of security and the strategic importance of the area as demonstrated by the extension of English capitulations to cover the Barbary states and naval responses to piracy in the region. I suggest that the attitude of the English authorities towards the Mediterranean changed with the establishment of permanent, growing English communities throughout the region. The state accepted more responsibility for security in the region although it was not always suitably organised or financially able to carry its responsibilities through.

The second concentrates on diplomatic attempts to deal with individual cases of piracy and the problems which that brought to ambassadors. I demonstrate the weakness of the Porte to resolve cases involving the Barbary pirates but show that where possible, the Porte was willing to do what it could to resolve genuine cases of piracy, recognising that the English authorities lacked control over all English pirates and did what they could, when they could. In this chapter I also tackle the more complicated issue of English piracy in the region and establishes the pattern of diplomacy used to free even guilty parties from Ottoman captivity. I also explore the difficult position in which the English found themselves during the Venetian-Ottoman Cretan War from 1645-69 when they were coerced to participate and accused of collaboration with the enemy by both sides. Ambassadors had to protect merchants from Venetian blockades and Ottoman conscription and did so with some success.

In the final chapters I look further afield to England's wider high-level diplomatic negotiations at the Porte. In one chapter I explore the pivotal role which the Anglo-Ottoman

relationship played in English hopes of containing the Habsburg threat. This encompasses the anti-Spanish alliance which first sealed Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic relations and Anglo-Ottoman participation in the balance of power struggle for the central European princedoms. I focus on the intense diplomacy of the late 1620s when the English Crown used several avenues, including the Ottoman vassal state of Transylvania, to pursue its policy of containing the Habsburgs. While more work is required on the Ottoman and Transylvanian attitudes to this policy, my examination of the English role in trying to draw the Transylvanians from an Ottoman orbit to a Protestant alliance adds a new dimension to work done on England's European foreign policy objectives.

In the final chapter I assess the English commitment to a idea of a 'corps of Christendom' and the effects this concept had upon English policy at the Porte. Historians have already established that English writers and commentators in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century clung to the notion of a united Christian community in spite of the conflicts of the Reformation. This chapter explores the manifestations of this idea at the Porte through the English mediation on behalf of the Poles in the 1620s and a joint Swedish-Transylvanian deputation in the 1650s. As part of such attempts to create a role for the English as champions of Christendom generally, the English ambassadors were also charged with the task of defending the Orthodox Church against the influence of the Jesuits and with creating an anti-Rome alliance. In these chapters I demonstrate that despite the remarkable success of the English at the Porte, there were limitations to their policy at the Porte. I emphasise that the Porte had its own foreign policy agenda, which did not dance to the tune of Western ambassadors at the Porte. I also suggest that the Anglo-Ottoman relationship should be explored as part of a wider picture as the English authorities viewed the it within a European context and saw it as a balancing element in European power struggles.

My study by no means exhausts the subject of Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic relations during this period and in some ways raises more questions than it answers, begging questions about the extent of English involvement in piracy in the Mediterranean and in the Venetian-Ottoman Cretan war as well as questions about the attitude of the Porte to English involvement in Transylvanian affairs during the Thirty Years War and beyond. Nevertheless, it establishes

the advantages which the English had over their rivals at the Porte and the success they achieved in their routine diplomacy at the Porte. The English were able to capitalise on their effective organisation and able ambassadors to achieve a more than adequate level of protection for English communities, trade and interests within the Ottoman Empire. They even used the Anglo-Ottoman relationship to achieve several, albeit limited, successes in establishing security in the Mediterranean and in contributing towards a balance of power diplomacy in Europe as a whole.

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APPENDIX ONE: ENGLISH AMBASSADORS AT THE PORTE 1583-1661

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NOTE ON ORTHOGRAPHY AND NAMES

All Turkish words have been given according to their spellings in the Redhouse: Yeni Türkçe-İngilizce Sözlük (Istanbul, 1968). The only exception is Vizier which has been spelled in this familiar English form. I have used the place names as used in ambassadorial reports, thus Istanbul appears as Constantinople and Izmir as Smyrna. Where names are less familiar, I have put the modern Turkish name in brackets. Names of Ottoman officials are spelt according to Danişmend: İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi (Istanbul, 1961). Occasionally, the Turkish plural forms *-ler*, *-lar* have been used for convenience.

I have used the 'Old Style' dating of the Julian Calendar throughout, except that the year has been taken to begin on 1 January. In citing original sources, where the New Year is dated from 25 March, I have used the dual form 1583/4 for dates between 1 January to 24 March to indicate that these dates would have been in 1583 in contemporary usage but in 1584 in modern style. Where the dating of the day is crucial, I have used the dual form 15/25 June to distinguish between old and modern styles.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following is a guide to the most frequently cited references, periodicals and manuscript locations. The titles of all other sources are given in full on their first appearance and thereafter are abbreviated.

Add. MSS	Additional Manuscripts
<u>AHR</u>	<u>American Historical Review</u>
Ash. MSS.	Ashmolean Manuscripts
<u>BIHR</u>	<u>Bulletin of Institute of Historical Research</u>
B.L.	British Library, London
Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
<u>BSOAS</u>	<u>Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies</u>
Chamberlain	John Chamberlain: <u>Letters</u> (ed.) Norman Egbert McClure (Philadelphia, 1939) 2 Vols.
Clarendon	<u>State Papers Collected by Edward, Earl of Clarendon, Commencing 1621</u> , (ed.) R. Scrope & T. Monkhouse 3 Vols. (Oxford, 1767-86)
<u>Consul</u>	Sonia P. Anderson: <u>An English Consul in Turkey</u> (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989)
<u>CSPD</u>	<u>Calendar of States Papers Domestic</u>
<u>CSPV</u>	<u>Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts relating to English Affairs in the Archives and Collections of Venice and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy, 1581-91 et Seq.</u> (ed.) Horatio F. Brown
<u>Ec.HR</u>	<u>Economic History Review</u>
<u>EHR</u>	<u>English Historical Review</u>
<u>EI²</u>	<u>Encyclopedia of Islam</u> (2nd. Edit., Leiden, 1954-)
ERO	Essex Records Office, Chelmsford
Hakluyt	Richard Hakluyt: <u>The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation</u> 12 Vols. (Glasgow 1904)
<u>Harborne</u>	Susan Anne Skilliter: <u>William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey</u> (Cambridge, 1977)
Harl. MSS	Harleian Manuscripts
<u>HJ</u>	<u>Historical Journal</u>

<u>HMC</u>	<u>Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports and Calendar Series</u>
<u>IJMES</u>	<u>International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies</u>
<u>Int. Hist. Rev.</u>	<u>International History Review</u>
<u>JAOS</u>	<u>Journal of African and Oriental Studies</u>
<u>JESHO</u>	<u>Journal of Social and Economic History of the Orient</u>
<u>JHS</u>	<u>Journal of Hellenic Studies</u>
<u>JMH</u>	<u>Journal of Modern History</u>
Lansd. MSS	Lansdowne Manuscripts
<u>Negs</u>	Roe, Sir Thomas: <u>Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe in his Embassy to the Ottoman Porte from 1621-8</u> (ed.) Samuel Richardson (London, 1740)
<u>P&P</u>	<u>Past and Present</u>
PRO	Public Records Office, Chancery Lane, London
Purchas	Samuel Purchas: <u>Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas, His Pilgrimes</u> 12 Vol. (Hakluyt Soc., 1905-7)
Rawl. MSS	Rawlinson Manuscripts
Rycaut	Paul Rycaut: <u>A Narrative of the Voyage of Heneage Finch from Smyrna to Constantinople</u> (London, 1661)
SP	State Papers
<u>SI</u>	<u>Studia Islamica</u>
<u>Thurloe</u>	<u>A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, 7 Vols.</u> (ed.) T. Birch (London, 1742)
<u>TSAB</u>	<u>Turkish Studies Association Bulletin</u>
Wood	A.C. Wood: <u>History of the Levant Company</u> (Oxford, 1935)

GLOSSARY

Ağa: chief or general, e.g. commander of janissaries.

Ahidname: Formal agreement between Ottoman Empire and another state, e.g. Capitulations.

Akçe: (also asper) Silver coin, basic unit of Ottoman currency.

Akrabalık: Blood relationship, one of the links which, in Ottoman theory, drew society together.

Aman: Grant of safe-conduct within Ottoman territories, either granted to resident foreign communities or to individual travellers, when it acted as a passport.

Arz: Petition, used generally for communications with sultan.

Askeri: (lit. military) Ottoman subjects exempt from tax, including members of ruling military, bureaucratic and religious hierarchies.

Avania: Fine or bribe, often illegally placed on foreign communities by local officials.

Bab-i Humayun: Imperial gate of Topkapı Saray; the main gate of the palace.

Bailo: Venetian Ambassador to Porte.

Berat: 1) Official document of appointment to office
2) Exemption from tax and from prosecution by Ottoman courts given to foreign resident communities and their local staff.

Bostancıbaşı: (lit. head of gardeners) Police-chief for all sultan's residences; investigated crimes against sultan. Also supervised shipping on Golden Horn, Sea of Marmara and Bosphorus.

Capitulations: Unilateral personal grant of privileged status from Ottoman sultan to foreign non-muslim merchant communities.

Çavuş: (Eng. Chaous) Imperial messenger.

Chequins/Sequins: Venetian gold coin used as one of the hard foreign currencies in the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century. Official rate was 1 Sequin: 2½ Ottoman Sultani (1 Sultani: 120 Akçe) [Source: Strachan: Sir Thomas Roe p. 165]

Cins: Ethnic ties, one of the links which, in Ottoman theory, drew society together.

Cizye: Poll tax collected from heads of family of non-muslim Ottoman subjects.

Company Court: A general assembly of the English merchant community. They met on a regular basis to work out strategy for particular cases and to establish local policies to meet changing commercial situations.

Dar al-Harb: Non-Muslim lands.

Defterdar: Treasurer, also issued Capitulations because responsible for providing documents of tax exemption and controlling customs rates.

Divan (-i Humayun): Imperial council and last judicial resort originally presided over by sultan, but by seventeenth century, increasingly led by Grand Vizier.

Dragoman: Ott. Tercüman (translator), official translators within foreign embassies.

Emin-i Gümrük: Local official charged with collecting customs duties, known as the Customer by English merchants.

Fetihname: Bulletin of Ottoman victory sent to other sovereigns for propaganda purposes.

Ferman: Decree of sultan

Galata: District on European coast of Constantinople, where merchants and resident ambassadors lived.

Grand Vizier (Sadr-i Azam): Sultan's deputy who increasingly presided over divan and led troops into battle as sultan became more secluded from military and political life in seventeenth century.

Gürüş: Silver or gold coin, covering both larger Ottoman currency and various forms of foreign currency used in the Ottoman Empire.

Haraç: Land tax paid by reaya and zimmi subjects.

Harbi: Non-Muslim foreigner travelling in Ottoman territory without an *aman*

Hatt-i humayun: Imperial mandate.

Hatt-i şerif: See *Hatt-i humayun*.

Hüccet: Document issued by the *Kadı*'s court.

Intisab: Client-patron relationship, one of the links which, in Ottoman theory, drew society together.

Janissaries: (Ott. Yeniçeri) Ottoman standing infantry.

Joint-stock Company: Merchant Company which operated and organised particular trade itself. Funds were raised for trading enterprises through sale of shares. Investors did not have to be actively involved in trade. See also *Regulated Company*

Kadı: Judge, member of *Ulema* administering *Shar'ia* and *Kanun*, also having local administrative functions.

Kafes: 'Cage', set of apartments where sultan's sons and brothers were confined.

Kahya: (lit. steward of household) Agent, deputy.

Kanun: State law issued by Sultan.

Kapıcı: Door-keeper of Palace, often doubled as an imperial messenger.

Kapudan Paşa: Commander of the Ottoman fleet, also responsible for security in the Galata district of Constantinople.

Kaymakam: Deputy Grand Vizier, always resident in Constantinople and responsible for the administration of the state during the Grand Vizier's absence.

Kazasker: (of Rumelia or of Anatolia) Member of Imperial Divan and performed judicial

function as a court of appeal.

Khil'a: Official robe.

Khil'at al-kudum: Robe of honour given to foreign guest.

Khil'at al-niyaba (al istikrar): Robe of appointment to government office.

Kira: Title given to successive Jewish women who were ostensibly employed by the women of the Royal Harem to purchase jewellery on their behalf. They also acted as messengers and intermediaries between the Royal Harem and the foreign communities.

Mufti of Istanbul (Şeyhülİslam): Main interpreter of Shar'ia. Appointed by sultan but legal opinion could contradict views of Sultan. Remained apart from direct authority of Grand Vizier and therefore had no seat on divan. Regularly consulted in matters of state as well as faith, e.g. for deposition of sultan.

Müste'min: Foreign resident protected by *aman* (see above)

Nişancı: Keeper of Sultan's tuğra. Responsible for maintaining uniformity of chancery practice and capitulations.

Paşa: Title of senior officials in central and provincial administration.

Reaya: Tax-paying subjects.

Regulated Company: Trading Company organised on similar lines to guild. Acted as a licensing and regulating agency for particular trade monopoly. Main purpose to ensure maintenance of monopoly through strict standards of trading practice. Members were free to conduct own trade within the rules laid down by the Company.

Reisülküttab: Originally chief scribe of the Divan, the Reisülküttab became the administrative assistant of the Grand Vizier and later virtual foreign minister by dint of his close working relationship with resident ambassadors.

Sahib-i mühür: Seal-master, title of Grand Vizier derived from the ring seal used to mark his authority.

Shari'a: Corpus of Islamic law.

Sipahi: member of Ottoman 'feudal' cavalry who held grant to collect land revenue from a particular area. See *Timar*. Also used loosely for Ottoman standing cavalry.

Strangers' Consulage: (Ott: baylaç hakkı and konsolos hakkı) Additional duty imposed by Levant Company on foreign cargoes carried in English ships. Source of controversy over whether should supplement Company's or Crown's income.

Timar: Fief, strictly one of less than 20,000 akçe a year, held under condition of military service.

Tuğra: Sultan's monogram, decoratively embellished on official documents and coins to confirm their legality. The equivalent of the English king's Great and Privy Seal.

Ulema: Body of Muslim scholars from whose number the religious functionaries of the state were drawn.

Valide Sultan: Sultan's mother.

Zimmi: Non-muslim *reaya* of Ottoman Empire, normally 'Peoples of the Book', i.e. Christians and Jews.

INTRODUCTION

The Scope of the Study

In 1583, the English Crown established formal diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire by setting up an embassy in Constantinople. This was the first stage of a relationship which was to last until the death of the last Ottoman sultan. Between 1583 and 1661, the status of the English ambassador at the Porte grew from that of a frail late-comer, faced with sustained hostility from the well-established French and Venetians, to become the pre-eminent western representative. As the English position at the Porte developed, so did the embassy's sophistication in its organisation and management of diplomatic negotiations.

David Horn has suggested two landmarks in the history of international relations.¹ The first was the shift from occasional missions towards regular diplomatic representation which occurred in the Italian city states during the fifteenth century.² The second was the development of a national, specialized ministry to handle all foreign relations, which became the general pattern of diplomacy in Europe in the eighteenth century.³ Charles Carter has suggested a middle stage: the establishment of permanent resident embassies abroad by major European states, which happened in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁴ The development of this resident diplomacy and England's approach to it with regard to her

1 See David Baynes Horn's introduction: British Diplomatic Service, 1689-1789 (Oxford, 1961)

2 The main exponent of this first development in diplomacy is Garret Mattingly in 'The First Resident Embassies: Medieval Italian Origins of Modern Diplomacy' Speculum XII (1937) pp. 423-39 and Renaissance Diplomacy (London, 1955).

3 On this so called diplomatic revolution, see Jeremy Black (ed.): Knights Errant and True Englishmen: British Foreign Policy 1660-1800; Ibid: 'Essay and Reflection: On the "Old System" and the "Diplomatic Revolution" of the Eighteenth Century' Int. Hist. Rev. XII.2 (1990) pp. 301-23.

4 Charles H. Carter: 'The Ambassadors of Early Modern Europe: Patterns of Diplomatic Representation in the Early Seventeenth Century' in From the Renaissance to the Counter Reformation (Essays in Honour of Garret Mattingly) (Ed.) Charles H. Carter (London, 1966) pp. 269-95. Maurice Keens-Soper: 'François de Callières and Diplomatic Theory' HJ 16.3 (1973) pp. 485-508, pp. 487-92 takes Carter's work a stage further, he assesses changes in seventeenth century concepts of diplomatic duties to trace the development from resident to institutional diplomat.

relations with the Ottoman Empire form the basis of this thesis.

England was slow to develop a wide corps of resident diplomats throughout Europe. Unlike Spain and Venice, which conducted much of their diplomatic business through their residents abroad, English governments preferred to deal with foreign residents at the English court. This form of diplomacy suited a restricted crown budget, and enabled ministers to handle diplomatic business quickly and directly. When the English did send out resident ambassadors, these were usually to deal with specific negotiations and held a limited brief.

The English began to need resident embassies abroad as merchant communities spread beyond Europe to Russia, to Persia and to the Ottoman Empire. Ambassadors to these states were special cases because they functioned both as commercial and as diplomatic representatives.¹ They were permitted by the Crown because they were maintained by the trading companies which had a trade monopoly for that region. The English embassy at Constantinople was funded by the Turkey, later Levant, Company.² A significant part of an ambassador's work involved representing the Company's interests at the Porte.³ However, this commercial aspect has overwhelmed the embassy's diplomatic role in historians' accounts.

Those researching the Levant Company have understandably neglected the diplomatic and

1 Ambassadors to Persia in particular lacked the balanced duality of ambassadors at the Porte. They were generally purely commercial agents except during periods when England was toying with the idea of replacing the Levant routes with a North-South route through Russia to Persia. See J. Rives Childs: 'The Evolution of British Diplomatic Representation in the Middle East' Journal of Royal Central Asian Society 26.4 (1939) pp. 634-47, pp. 637-8

2 The first monopoly for trade with Turkey was awarded in 1581 to a group of merchants who became known as the 'Turkey merchants'. On the expiry of their patent, they campaigned for the extension of their monopoly to cover trade with Venice. This was awarded to the merchants who were incorporated as 'The Governor and Company of Merchants of the Levant'. After a brief period as a *joint-stock* company, the company then changed to a *regulated* company in the 1590s. See Harborne; Wood chap. 1; T.S. Willan: 'Some Aspects of English Trade with the Levant in the Sixteenth Century' EHR LXX (1955) pp. 399-410. To avoid changes in terminology, the Turkey/Levant Company will hereafter be referred to as the Company.

3 I have used the ambiguous 'Porte' to represent the seat of Ottoman government and administration. Strictly speaking, the Sublime Porte as a location did not come into being until the state administration was moved out of the Topkapi Saray (palace) to a separate residence in the 1650s, see Davison: Bab-ı Ali in EI². Prior to that, the Porte represented the seat of the sultan and could therefore move with him. Nevertheless, western ambassadors refer to the Porte in their reports, in the more general sense I have adopted, possibly for similar reasons of convenient brevity.

political aspects of England's relationship with the Ottoman Empire.¹

Despite historians' concentration on its commercial status, the embassy at the Porte was important in diplomatic terms too. Although the state did not fund the embassy, it used the embassy to promote its diplomatic aims. The struggle between Company and Crown over the selection of suitable ambassadorial candidates clearly shows that the Crown was keen to maintain and expand its control over the representatives. The embassy's continuity and its distance from Whitehall allows a detailed study of the development of English diplomatic practice through policy planning, chancery practice and negotiations at low and high levels.

A study of England's diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire also sheds light on the development of Ottoman diplomacy. The development of diplomatic relations with western nations through the capitulatory agreements of the second half of the sixteenth century denoted a shift in Ottoman diplomacy. It marked the formal opening of the Porte to the *dar al-harb* (non-muslim lands). This was only a subtle change because the Ottoman Empire continued to practise reciprocal diplomacy only within *dar al-Islam* (Muslim states). To Christian nations, it offered a unilateral form of diplomacy based on a personal grant of status from the sultan.² Much has been written about the various capitulations, and with the treaty of Zsitvatorok (1606), they have been used as evidence that the Ottoman Empire was moving away from its non-reciprocal form of diplomacy towards the international system of the West. The rising influence of the western nations at the Porte is cited as an indication that the seventeenth century saw an inexorable drive towards the European system. There was, however, no permanent Ottoman residence abroad until 1793.³ The details of the developing

1 Amongst English studies, Wood's establishes the duality of the role of ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire as servants of the State and of the Company but does not expand on their diplomatic role during the first century of direct relations. M. Epstein: Early History of the Levant Company (London, 1908) does not cover the diplomatic angle at all. M.S. Kütükoğlu: Osmanlı-İngiliz İktisadi Münasebetleri 2 Vols. (Ankara, 1974) I 1580-1838 examines English commercial relations in a broader context but the broad time-span of the work allows only a brief sketch of the issues.

2 See below, chap. 5 p. 141.

3 On Ottoman diplomacy, see Joel C. Hurewitz: 'Ottoman Diplomacy and the European State System' Middle East Journal XV (1961) pp. 141-52

diplomatic relationship between England and the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century go some way to explain why full reciprocity was not attempted before the late eighteenth century.

There have been several studies of the opening of English diplomacy at the Porte but these have been restricted to narrow periods, personalities or documentary studies.¹ Likewise those studying the latter half of the seventeenth century also have a very narrow scope.² Such studies, especially those which have made the existing Ottoman sources more accessible to the historian, are invaluable but they cannot provide an overview of the development of either the embassy at the Porte or the wider Anglo-Ottoman relationship. Most Ottoman scholars have ignored the potential for tracing the pattern of state diplomacy with the West until the development of a fully reciprocal system in the late eighteenth century.

My own study attempts to rectify this lack of a broader analysis of the early diplomatic relationship between England and the Ottoman Empire. It complements the work on the economic role of the English in the Ottoman Empire, while at the same time challenging the accepted view that

'diplomatic relations which started with the mission of William Harborne...were confined to commercial aspects until they assumed a strategic

1 The most notable of these are Ahmet Refik's edited documents: Türkler ve Kraliçe Elizabet (Constantinople, 1932); Orhan Burian: 'Türk-İngiliz Münasebetinin İlk Yılları' Ankara Üniversitesi Dil Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi IX (1951) pp. 1-17; Arthur Horniker's articles on the early years of the embassy 'William Harbourne and the beginning of Anglo-Turkish Diplomatic and Commercial Relations' JMH XIV (1942) pp. 289-316; 'Anglo-French Rivalry in the Levant from 1583-1612' JMH XVIII (1946) pp. 289-305; Susan Skilliter's documentary studies 'Turkish Documents Relating to Edward Barton's Embassy to the Porte' Ph.D Thesis, Manchester, 1965; 'Three Letters from the Ottoman "Sultana" Safiye to Queen Elizabeth I' in Documents from Islamic Chanceries (Ed.) S.M. Stern (Oxford, 1965) pp. 119-57; 'The Organisation of the First English Embassy in Istanbul in 1583' Asian Affairs 10 (1979) pp. 159-65 and Harborne. Other studies of the early years include H. Dereli: Kraliçe Elizabeth Devrinde Türkler ve İngilizler: Bir Araştırma; A.N. Kurat: Türk-İngiliz Münasebetlerinin Başlangıcı ve Gelişmesi 1553-1610 (Ankara, 1953).

2 For the most recent works on this subject, see Sonia P. Anderson's study of Paul Rycout in the 1660s and 1670s, An English Consul in Turkey (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989); Colin J. Heywood: 'English Diplomacy Between Austria and the Ottoman Empire in the War of the Sacraliga 1684-1699' London Ph.D. Thesis, 1970. Phyllis S. Lach: The Diplomatic Corps under Charles II and James II (Brunswick, New Jersey, 1965) pp. 14, 19 writes off the embassy at the Porte as being outside the diplomatic sphere.

and political dimension with the capture of India by the British in 1757.’¹

Within the available time and word constraints, it would be impossible to undertake a study of the Anglo-Ottoman relationship from 1583 up to 1757, when England’s relationship with the Ottoman Empire became an issue in what historians have called ‘the eastern question’.² My study concentrates instead on the first eighty years of direct diplomatic relations from their establishment up until 1661, when the Restoration had ensured the continuation of the Stuart dynasty on the English throne, and the reins of Ottoman power had successfully passed from one Köprülü Vizier to another. This allows an investigation of the issues which shaped the relationship, the way in which both English ambassadors and the Porte adapted to dealing with each other on a practical basis and the form these negotiations took. It is an exploration of the English response to relations with a non-European power and how such relations, conducted alongside western concepts of diplomatic privilege and immunity, helped them to define and widen their own concept of diplomacy.

The Anglo-Ottoman relationship in this period is particularly interesting because both states experienced rapid change, internal revolution and increased bureaucratisation leading to a period of greater stability after c.1656. These similarities arose from the requirements and aspirations of the state, which, in both cases, sought to deal with the problems of supplying the state treasury, keeping open links and communications between the centre and the periphery, and protecting national interests by maintaining a profile upon the international stage.

The relationship also highlighted the differences between England and the Ottoman Empire. It developed when England was beginning to expand beyond Europe, while the Ottoman Empire had already expanded as far as Yemen, North Africa, the Dalmatian Coast, Hungary and the Caucasus. It had already stretched itself as far as its supply lines would allow and was adjusting to a period of virtual stasis and consolidation. Political and commercial

1 See Mim Kemal Oke: ‘Professor Arminius Vambery and Anglo-Ottoman Relations (1887-1907) *TSAB* 9 (1985) pp. 15-27, p. 15.

2 To gain a picture of this span of relations, see the collection of articles edited by William Hale and Ali İhsan Bağış: Four Centuries of Turco-British Relations (Walkington, 1984)

diplomacy must be examined in the light of the broader context of the national and domestic concerns of both the Ottoman Empire and England in order to fit this often neglected Christian-Muslim cordiality into its European context.

The chronological scope of any study is somewhat arbitrary but traces the relationship from its vulnerable beginning, through to the first peak of English diplomatic influence at the Porte in the 1650s to see how and why the English reached this pre-eminence. By the 1660s, the Dutch had surpassed English trade in the region and the French were again beginning to challenge English diplomatic supremacy at the Porte.

The English position remained favourable until the mid-1670s when the Capitulations reached their final form, so 1661 does not mark a clear-cut dividing line in English fortunes. Indeed, the pattern of diplomacy continued along the same lines as it had done in the first half of the century, with the new ambassador, Heneage Finch, Earl of Winchelsea, relying on the experience and practices of his predecessors.

Nevertheless, there was a sea-change in the priorities of the Ottoman Empire and England in the 1660s. Both had suffered a period of internal turmoil in the 1640s and early 1650s and each wanted to put his own house in order. The international battle to maintain a balance of power had shifted away from the Ottoman orbit to the sea-ways of the world: to the Baltic, the Atlantic and the Caribbean, making cooperation against joint enemies less likely. The relationship remained important because of England's interests in the Mediterranean and her resident communities on Ottoman territory, but the international dimension had dwindled, albeit temporarily, in the 1660s.

Problems and Sources

A major problem of this study is the nature of the sources. The obvious language difficulty of Ottoman sources is compounded by a paucity of Ottoman sources relating to English affairs at the Porte. The *Ecnebi Defterleri* (registers of foreigners) for the English in

this period do not survive.¹ The *Mühimme Defterleri* (registers of important matters) which contain imperial responses to petitions are less fruitful for diplomatic matters and are only catalogued to the mid-1590s. To deal with the uncatalogued registers would take considerably more time than I possess.

Such problems with the Ottoman sources inevitably create problems of balance. As a historian venturing into the world of the Ottomanist, I have taken pains to level any western biases which might creep in by using the Ottoman sources collected in the works of Ahmet Refik, A.N. Kurat and Susan Skilliter.² I have also used the Italian translations of various *fermans* (imperial orders) which are enclosed in the reports of the English ambassadors.

The Ottoman chronicles of Selaniki, Peçevi and Naima help to build up a picture of the Ottoman context of the relationship.³ Ottoman diplomatic practice and the workings of the Ottoman administration can be established through various hand books and documentary studies while there is a wealth of western and Turkish secondary source material which assesses the concerns and priorities of the Ottoman Empire.

In addition to building up this composite view of the Ottoman Empire, it was important to balance English sources with reports from other Western representatives at the Porte.⁴ Venetian reports and accounts of the French ambassadors, who were England's greatest rivals at the Porte for most of the period, can counterbalance English versions of

1 Given how much business England did with the Porte, it is inconceivable that no such register existed.

2 See above, p. 4.

3 See Mustafa Efendi Selaniki: *Tarihi* (ed. & translit.) Dr. Mehmet Ipsirli (Istanbul 1989) 2 Vol.; Peçevi: *Tarihi* (ed.) Bekir Sıtkı Baykal (Ankara, 1981-82) 2 Vol.; Mustafa Naima: *Tarihi* (trans.) Zuhuri Danişman (Istanbul, 1969) 6 Vol. with corroboration from Naima: *Tarihi* (Constantinople, 1283) 6 Vol.

4 For the benefits and pitfalls of using foreign reports, see Ezel Kural Shaw: 'The Double Veil: Travellers' Views of the Ottoman Empire from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century' in Ezel Kural Shaw & Colin J. Heywood (eds.): *English and Continental Views of the Ottoman Empire 1500-1800* (Los Angeles, 1972) pp. 1-29

events.¹

On the English side, the official reports of successive English ambassadors to the Porte, give considerable detail.² These are supplemented, where possible, with personal letters and, in the case of Sir Thomas Bendish (ambassador 1647-60) diaries, of ambassadors.³ Details of life in the English communities in Constantinople, Smyrna and Aleppo can be gleaned from the Company papers and from the accounts of various administrative staff at the embassy.⁴ Accounts of contemporary travellers add further glimpses of the life of the English communities. In addition, parliamentary proceedings, proclamations and the letters of various secretaries of state place the Anglo-Ottoman relationship into the broader context of English foreign policy.

These, then, are the main sources for my thesis. Western sources have been used cautiously, and as far as possible, objectively. Biases within the sources were not insurmountable since the Anglo-Ottoman relation was generally a pragmatic one, with compromises on both sides. The form which my study takes fell into place almost as straightforwardly.

Form of Thesis

My study aims to be accessible to historians of Ottoman and English history alike and attempts to introduce both audiences to the domestic expectations which governed relations and to the working environment of ambassadors at the Porte. For this reason, two introductory

1 On Venice, see CSPV. On France, E. Charrière: Négotiations de la France dans le Levant (Paris, 1848-60); Gérard du Tongas: Les Relations de la France avec l'Empire Ottoman durant la Première Moitié du Dix-Septième Siècle (Toulouse, 1942)

2 These are mainly to be found in the PRO, States Papers 97/1-17 although others are scattered in the Egerton and Nicholas Papers in the British Library (See individual references for these). Only Thomas Roe's official correspondence has been published, in Negs.

3 Dates of ambassador's residence will be given in brackets on his first appearance in each chapter. A fuller biography of each ambassador is given in Appendix I. For Roe's private letters to Dr Foxe, see B.L. Harl. Ms 416 ff. 114-115a; 130-131a; 232; for Bendish's personal papers see Essex Records Office D/dhf 01-049.

4 For Company papers, see PRO SP105/110;/143-4; for Aleppo registers see SP 110; For accounts by embassy personnel see Bodl. MS. Rawl C 799; John Sanderson: Travels (Hakluyt Soc., 1931) and Purchas.

chapters deal with the 'world-views' of the English and Ottoman states, showing their goals for foreign policy and constraints in domestic policy. These provided the motivations for the relationship and shaped the nature of it. They also demonstrate that commercial and political aspirations form an integrated diplomatic policy in this period.

Moving on to the Porte in part I, an analysis of the ceremonial etiquette of the Ottoman state demonstrates how important the correct forms were to the establishment and maintenance of status. In the second chapter, the formality and detachment of the sultan is contrasted with the more adaptable English court greetings, and the status of the English ambassador to the Porte within the English court hierarchy is assessed.

Leaving the glittering ceremonial of the courts, the study then explores the nature of the embassy itself: its personnel and administrative work. This establishes how the English managed routine diplomatic affairs and why they were so successful in a system more formalised than their own.

The bulk of the thesis examines the development of English policy involving the Ottoman Empire. This is restricted to three main areas which were mutually important to both parties. Firstly, the most basic level of diplomacy: ambassadorial attempts to protect the resident English communities in Constantinople, Smyrna and Aleppo. An exploration of the differing experiences of these communities and the Ottoman response to them establishes that the English received fairer treatment at the hands of the Ottomans than is traditionally believed.

The second sphere of concern for ambassadors, and policy-makers in England, was the security of shipping in the Mediterranean, a corollary of protecting English trade. There were two strands of this policy: broad-based security policy and the individual protection of Englishmen, shipping, and property in the region. Once again, this reinforces my argument that the English were treated favourably by the Porte and that Ottoman failure to ensure security was the result of a growing lack of control over their North African vassal states rather than an unwillingness to cooperate on the part of the Porte itself.

Finally, there is a brief survey of the wider diplomatic efforts of the English at the

Porte, focusing on the 1620s: their efforts to secure a European balance of power and to take a lead in international affairs. The Porte, with its exclusive band of resident ambassadors, offered good opportunities for the English. They could secure their own interests in other international spheres by acting as intermediaries for other powers with interests in the Ottoman orbit. The study assesses English motivations and the methods they use to put pressure on the Porte. The picture which emerges is by no means that of a weak Ottoman state, easily persuaded to act by western powers. In foreign affairs, the Ottoman state had its own agenda and it is clear from this study that it would only comply with English pressures when it suited its own purposes to do so.

While my study by no means exhausts the subject, it provides an introduction and an Ottoman context to this neglected aspect of English foreign policy for the English historian and provides a picture of the changing apparatus of the Ottoman state and the development of East-West diplomacy for the Ottomanist.

I have tried hard to be all things to all historians and Ottomanists and hope I have not failed in my attempt to engage two audiences. I am conscious of daring to bridge the wide gap between English historians and Ottomanists in such a short time. I hope that others, more skilled than I, may find the time to fill in the details of the period and of individual embassies and take up the challenge to trace the development of relations to the fully reciprocal diplomacy of the final decades of the eighteenth century.

THE VIEW FROM WHITEHALL: ENGLISH FOREIGN POLICY AND THE NATURE OF ANGLO-OTTOMAN RELATIONS

The Motivation Behind English Foreign Policy

It is dangerous to look for consistent trends of policy over a period of nearly a century, from 1580 to 1660. In most cases, foreign policy was formulated to deal with the immediate necessities of short-term crises. Decisions taken in foreign affairs were frequently reactions to events abroad and their impact on England rather than English foreign policy initiatives. Nevertheless, the issues and motives which shaped decisions were common to both Tudor and Stuart governments, and this created a natural continuity in foreign policy.

National security, or the creation and defence of stability in England both domestically and externally, was clearly at the base of all foreign policy decisions. There was, however, a cocktail of considerations vying for pre-eminence as the best method to achieve it. Successive English governments had to decide which of these ways was to be given priority in policy-making.

The Religious Dimension

One vehicle for ensuring stability was to conduct foreign policy through alliances created on the basis of religious ideology. Although the Reformation had put the rubber-stamp on the death of 'Christendom' as a unified community bound together by a common religious identity, there still remained a degree of common Christian solidarity, especially when faced by outsiders such as the Ottoman Empire. English governments particularly favoured this approach because it suited the restricted budget and resources of England.

Policies involving religious ideology varied in emphasis according to the circumstances and personalities of individual English monarchs and their governments. Both Elizabeth and James made attempts to re-assert the concept of a corps of Christendom, possibly with the ulterior motive of embroiling the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs against their traditional Muslim enemy, the Ottoman Empire, and thereby restraining their activities against the

English.¹

Elizabeth used the newly established Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic relations to pursue the idea of a Christian Commonwealth, by promoting herself as a mediator for Christendom in the territorial struggle of the Austrian Habsburgs against the Ottomans, thereby undermining Spanish claims to the leadership of the Christian community. She also hoped to gain the goodwill and active intervention of the Austrian Habsburgs against Spanish hostility to England. At the same time, she hoped to distract the Spanish from their English campaign by forcing them to campaign against the Ottomans in the Mediterranean.

James I pursued a similar policy, albeit more reluctantly, because the Anglo-Ottoman relationship had developed so successfully that the English were in a strong position at the Porte and able to arbitrate on behalf of the Catholic king of Poland, Sigismund III. James's hesitation over this form of mediation lay in his strong personal sense of the vocation of a Christian Prince. He exhibited a traditional contempt for dealing with Muslim states, complaining when he had to receive an Ottoman Çavuş who visited England in 1603, and even threatened to close the embassy in Constantinople.² He allowed the English ambassador at the Porte to act as mediator only as part of his wider programme of European diplomacy and revealed in 'The Peacemaker' that he was personally in favour of a joint Christian campaign against the Ottomans.³ Clearly, this was not a realistic proposal, but once again tied in with his concept of Christian kingship and with his desire to see a re-united Europe enjoying peace internally while attacking an external threat.

The improbability of such unity of action was emphasised by the action of resident western ambassadors at the Porte. Consensus between ambassadors was rare and pragmatic

1 On the concept of a corps of Christendom, see Franklin L. Baumer: 'England, the Turk and the Common Corps of Christendom' *AHR* 50 (1944-45) pp. 26-48; Ibid: 'The Conception of Christendom in Renaissance England' *Journal of History of Ideas* 6 (1945) pp. 131-56.

2 See *CSPV* 1603-7 pp.121-22 no. 169 Piero Duodo and Nicolo Molini, Venetian Ambassadors in England to Doge and Senate, 11 Dec. 1603; Ibid. pp. 184-85 no. 278 Nicolo Molini to Doge and Senate, 6 Oct. 1604.

3 See J.V. Polisensky: 'Bohemia, the Turk and the Christian Commonwealth (1452-1620)' *Byzantinoslavica* 14 (1953) pp. 82-108, p. 107.

considerations of national interest generally won out over allegiance to a corps of Christendom presenting a united front to the Muslim authorities.

The ideological thrust of English foreign policy was increasingly determined by a sense of protestant identity. This was apparently contradictory to the promotion of Christendom as a vehicle for maintaining stability because it placed the English in a Protestant alliance with Holland, Sweden, various princedoms of Germany and the Huguenot minority in France against Catholic Spain, France and the Austrian Habsburg régime. In Elizabeth's and James's reigns, however, such Protestant orientation of policy existed as part of the larger idea of Christendom as a means of securing strong defensive allies for England against Spanish aggression.

For many, including those who served as agents of the state, Protestantism was a strong guiding influence.¹ Thomas Roe, English ambassador to the Porte (1622-28) exhibited a particularly firm and actively pursued commitment to a truly pan-Protestant cause. His policy represented a rare case where an ambassador personally influenced government policy, but the motivation of the government in accepting the policy differed from his personal ideological goal, being governed by a desire to find the best way to pursue and protect English interests.

Both Elizabeth and James reluctantly espoused the leadership of a loose protestant alliance, Elizabeth needed all the allies she could find to support England against Spanish hostility after 1585 and James saw it as a means to develop support for his programme of uniting Europe through diplomacy.²

In Charles I's reign, the emphasis shifted further to a protestant rather than a Christian policy which corresponded most closely to Charles's dreams of diminishing Habsburg dominance, and securing English trade interests abroad. His efforts to protect the Huguenots at La Rochelle in 1627 were aimed at restoring the power of the Protestant lobby in France

1 See Ian Roy: 'England Turned Germany? The Aftermath of the Civil War in its European Context' TRHS 28 (1978) pp. 127-44, pp. 131-32 for the involvement of English individuals on ideological grounds in the Thirty Year War .

2 On James I's commitment to this theory and his attempts to put it into practice, see W.B. Patterson: 'King James I and the Protestant Cause in the Crisis of 1618-22' Studies in Church History 18 (1982) pp. 319-34.

and reviving an Anglo-French alliance in place of a French-Spanish accord, which Richelieu was pursuing at that time. Charles's involvement in, and attempts to lead, a loose Protestant anti-Habsburg grouping during the Thirty Years War endeavoured to create a balance of power which left England less threatened by her Catholic neighbours. His efforts were limited by domestic constraints and effectively suspended by the outbreak of domestic hostilities in 1642, but this slant to foreign policy was a legacy to the Commonwealth, which continued to pursue the containment of the Habsburgs although it was also forced to turn on its protestant Dutch neighbours to protect its commercial interests.

Religious considerations were not the only determinant of foreign policy. With a limited budget and no standing army until the Civil War, English governments were loathe to involve the state in military campaigns. While English troops did fight abroad throughout the period, they were more often mercenaries than troops supplied as part of government policy. Although Elizabeth provided troops to support the Dutch against the Spanish from 1584-1604, they were sent as the outcome of increasingly worsening relations between England and Spain rather than from a desire to play a leading role in the European arena. Only when Charles, first as prince and then as king under the sway of George Villiers duke of Buckingham, began to influence policy did English troops participate in foreign campaigns at the instigation of the Crown as part of an active foreign policy. The failure of Mansfeld's expedition, supplied with English troops, to recapture the Palatinate in 1624 and the disasters of Cadiz in 1625 and La Rochelle in 1627 demonstrated that the English had neither the resources or the command structure to adequately supply and organize campaigns abroad. Campaigns cost money and it was out of the question for England to pursue hostile policies against all her rivals at once. Her best hope lay in achieving strength through a combination of strong defensive alliances abroad and domestic stability.

Trade and the Crown-Company Relationship

Consideration also had to be given to the importance of developing and protecting foreign trade as England required a strong economic base to sustain its internal stability. Trade

supplied the provisions of defence; munitions and naval materials. Indirectly, it provided income through taxes and duties which could fund defensive campaigns. It was therefore militarily important for England to maintain a broad trade base but trade was also important in its own right.

The relationship between commerce and the Crown had always been close since the Crown benefitted from dues and duties paid by merchants. From the 1580s on, as the Crown struggled to balance its books as expenditure increased, cooperation between Crown and commerce became even closer, especially with the establishment of several new chartered companies with Crown monopolies for trade in the 1580s and 1590s. These Crown grants to the Levant and East India companies reinforced the Crown's commitment to commerce by placing selected groups of merchants in a privileged trading position. Both Crown and companies benefitted mutually from favourable commercial legislation to protect trade and the establishment of diplomatic representation endorsed by the Crown but funded by companies.

The new companies became increasingly supportive of the Crown which was a major share-holder.¹ As the advantages of their commercial enterprises abroad became apparent, so the companies grew in stature, becoming the 'city merchant political elite' of London.² By 1630, almost half in value of England's imports (excluding wines) were being brought into the country by the Levant and East India Companies. They were an effective lobbying group, presenting petitions drawn up by members assemblies to the Crown through an executive committee led by the governor. Companies began to have a voice in commercial policy through domination of the Aldermanic court and the Customs Farming Syndicate. The company structure set members apart from small independent traders and producers in the city, and their desire to protect the exclusivity of their privileges made them naturally conservative.

1 Lawrence Stone: 'State Control in Sixteenth Century England' Ec.HR 17 (1947) pp. 103-20, p. 114

2 See Robert Brenner: Merchants and Revolution, Commercial Change, Political Conflict and London's Overseas Traders 1550-1653 (Princeton, NJ, 1993) p. 4.

The Crown and the Levant Company became interdependent as the Company relied on government protection in the form of naval support in the Atlantic-Mediterranean and legislation restricting freight to English ships while the Crown continued to increase its revenue from customs duties. Even in the 1630s when the Company quarrelled with Charles over the right of Strangers' Consulage on goods freighted to the Levant in English ships, it displayed no widespread discontent with the Crown.¹

The relationship lasted because the Crown tried to meet the Company's needs and the Company recognised the extent of its privileged position. After all, Charles I's policy of peace with Spain in the 1630s made the route to the Mediterranean more secure and the ship money fleet was used to support merchant shipping in the Levant. In addition, Charles's new Book of Rates was favourable to the Company: the duty on raw silk remained static while that on currants was reduced. An indication of the strength of the alliance between Crown and Company came in 1634 when the Company was given the right to establish an agent in the customs house to inspect incoming and outgoing Levant cargo, protecting the Company against interlopers.

Given this level of mutual support, it is not surprising that the majority of Company merchants in London sided with Charles in the civil war.² They viewed Parliamentary desires for reform as detrimental to general stability and their own particular position. Those merchants who supported Parliament were marginal members of the Company who felt they could improve their position in the free-trade conditions that they expected Parliament to endorse. The position was mirrored in the Levant, where the established merchants remained neutral while younger, less powerful merchants threw their lot in, first with the Parliamentary cause and then, after the establishment of the Commonwealth, with the king-in-exile, believing that they would benefit from reduced commercial control.

The Company had struggled against the free-trade lobby almost since its inception. In

¹ See below, p. 93 ff on Strangers' Consulage.

² For a detailed analysis of Levant Company loyalties during the English Civil War, see Brenner: Merchants pp. 374-81.

the 1590s, trade monopolies had come under fierce attack in the parliamentary discussions about the public interest of monopolies and the debate had been renewed with particular reference to trading companies in the parliamentary session of 1605-6.¹ The clamour over free trade was renewed with the establishment of the Commonwealth and the Company feared it would not be able to renew its charter. It presented lengthy petitions to the authorities outlining the necessity and benefits of the Company trade.² The Company's perception of the vulnerability of its position was probably exaggerated. The Commonwealth recognised the value of the revenue generated by the Levant trade and made a special case of the Company, arguing that it was in the public interest for the trade to continue in its restricted form. The Company was once again assured of a cordial relationship with the ruling authorities.

The Development of the Trading Companies

Although the idea of a regulated company had existed since the reign of Henry VII when the Merchant Adventurers had been chartered, the purpose and activity of the Elizabethan merchant Companies was new. The Merchant Adventurers had conducted an export trade in cloth, centring their overseas operation on the Antwerp market. From there, English cloth was bought and transported across Europe by Italian and French buyers. English interest only stretched as far as the Netherlands trade. The Elizabethan merchant Companies, however, were primarily import driven and went beyond the borders of Europe to seek direct access to old markets and to establish new ones.

The English had conducted trade outside Europe in the first half of the sixteenth century when English merchants were recorded trading in the Levant. However, direct English trade seemed to cease between the 1550s and the 1570s when English exports to the Levant

¹ Pauline Croft has suggested that the renewed hostility to the monopoly companies stemmed from gentry concerns that the corn trade would become restricted to the newly reformed Spanish Company, see her 'Free Trade and the House of Commons, 1605-6' Ec.HR 28 (1975) pp. 17-27.

² For two such petitions, see PRO SP105/144 ff. 64^v-68^v Company to Council of State for Trade: Narrative of Beginning and Progress of Trade to Turkey, 4 May 1652; *ibid* ff. 76^v-89 *Ibid* to *Ibid*: Reasons why Trade to Turkey will be carried with More Advantage to Commonwealth in a Company than in an Irregular Way, 21 May 1652.

were again mainly channelled through the traditional Antwerp market by Venetian and French merchants. Venetian rather than English merchants began to carry Levant goods to England.

The reasons for the English withdrawal from direct trade are not clear and have not yet been adequately explained. It is possible that Spanish control of the straits of Gibraltar and hostility to English merchants from the 1550s made the route undesirable and difficult.¹ The interruption of the Mediterranean route goes some way to explaining why the English were so keen to find the legendary north-east passage to Cathay as an alternative route to eastern markets. The establishment of the Russian trade and its extension into Persia was clearly viewed as a potential substitute to the Levant market, as was the drive to establish other markets in West Africa and the West Indies.

While alternative markets could be found for English exports, and they could continue to reach the Levant via the Antwerp network, the English were content to stay out of the Levant themselves. However, by the 1570s, neither Antwerp nor the Venetians were able to guarantee supply of the valuable Levant imports of raw silk, spices and currants which the English demanded.

There were several reasons behind this disruption of the Levant import trade. From the 1560s, the Antwerp market became unstable as the Netherlands began to struggle against Spanish control in a series of revolts. Antwerp was also closed to the English between 1563-64 in retaliation for English attempts to restrict foreign trade.² It was closed again from 1569-1573 when the Spanish commander in the Netherlands, the Duke of Alva, retaliated against the English seizure of Spanish bullion intended to supply Spanish troops by ordering a trade

1 See T.S. Willan: 'Some Aspects of English Trade with the Levant in the Sixteenth Century' *EHR* 70 (1955) pp. 399-410, p. 404. Spanish hostility during the reign of Mary Tudor is rather surprising but it is likely that, despite the political cordiality between England and Spain through Mary's marriage to Philip II, commercial competition and protection in Spanish ports continued unabated. The problems of English merchants in Spain may also be explained by Mary Tudor's concentration on re-establishing the Hanse trade until 1555, which left other merchant complaints unanswered. See G.D. Ramsey: The City of London in International Politics at the Accession of Elizabeth I (Manchester, 1975) pp. 63-67.

2 See Ramsey: City of London pp. 172-3, 195-204, 208-10.

embargo.¹ Even when trade resumed, the Revolt of the Netherlands continued to interfere with trade. In addition to this disruption of the traditional London–Antwerp trade nexus, from 1570–73, the Venetians were occupied in a war over Cyprus against the Ottoman Empire, which seriously restricted their maritime commerce and reduced their ability to act as middlemen for trade between the Levant and England.

The temporary cessation of imports from the Levant made it imperative for the English to take this trade back into their own hands and the coincidence of several favourable circumstances made the re-launch of the English Levant trade successful. The moves towards direct Levant trade led to the establishment of the Turkey Company in circa 1579. Elizabeth was granting trade monopolies to generate more Crown revenue which gave a measure of protection to the Company's venture in the Mediterranean. Moreover, partly as a result of technological developments brought to England in the 1560s by Flemish and Huguenot refugees, the Company was able to benefit from new textiles, the so-called 'New Draperies'. These were better able to compete with the more expensive, superior quality Venetian broadcloth and eventually replaced Venetian cloth in Levant markets. Finally, the English Levant trade profited from the full support of the English Crown, because it was established at a critical point in Anglo-Spanish relations, when Elizabeth was beginning to take Spanish hostility seriously and sought allies to swing the balance of European power in England's favour, or at least restrict Spanish actions. Elizabeth was searching for strategic allies at the same time as Osborne and Staper were seeking to open direct trade links with Ottoman ports. The Anglo-Ottoman relationship developed within this framework of considerations.

The Strategic Role of the Anglo-Ottoman Relationship

England had become increasingly wary of Spanish expansion and control of the Atlantic and New World since France, the traditional enemy of the English, had become embroiled in civil war in the 1560s. English merchants were frustrated by their exclusion from

¹ See Neville John Williams: The Maritime Trade of the East Anglian Ports (Clarendon, Oxford, 1988), pp. 74–76.

the westerly routes, especially after 1580, when Spain also controlled Portuguese possessions. The English government was concerned by Philip II's designs on the English throne and the activities of English Catholics abroad under Spanish protection. The Spanish threat moved closer with the arrival of Alva and his Spanish troops in the Netherlands in 1567, and culminated in the Spanish Armada of 1588. From then until the peace of 1604, the English government openly pursued an active naval policy designed to re-open the Atlantic to English shipping. Even during the negotiations for the Treaty of London, when England was exhausted by war with Spain, the issue of England's exclusion from the Atlantic trade routes proved a major stumbling block.¹

Although an active anti-Spanish policy was not executed until after 1588, contingency plans for action were being prepared as early as 1578, the year in which William Harborne first tried to establish direct trade with the Ottoman Empire. The development of hostility to the Spanish acted as a catalyst to the development of direct Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic relations formally established in 1583. Elizabeth's firm stance against Philip II and her, albeit reluctant, support of the Netherlands, especially in the provision of funds in 1577, provided her with worthy credentials in the eyes of the Ottoman Porte. The Ottoman Empire had demonstrated its ability to prevent Spain from concentrating on European concerns in the 1560s and 1570s. The crash of Antwerp and Philip II's bankruptcy were a result of Spain's inability to fight on two fronts. The Ottomans had forced Spain to lead the expensive Lepanto campaign of 1571 and uncertainty about Ottoman intentions meant that Spanish troops had to be kept in a state of readiness in the western Mediterranean until 1578, when they signed a truce with the Porte.²

The coincidence of shared anti-Spanish interests ensured Elizabeth's support for the establishment of direct diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire. By the late 1570s the Ottomans were unable to attack Spain on their own and welcomed any allies they could find.

¹ See Kenneth R. Andrews: 'Caribbean Rivalry and the Anglo-Spanish Peace of 1604' History 59 (1974) pp. 1-17, p. 14, 16-17.

² See Geoffrey Parker: Spain and the Netherlands 1559-1659 (London, 1979) pp. 28-34, 69-70, 122-133.

Elizabeth felt threatened by the strength of the Spanish attack in the Netherlands, which had been renewed after the Spanish-Ottoman truce of 1578, and by the Spanish conquest of Portugal in 1580. Commercial aspirations provided good cover for the political objectives of the Anglo-Ottoman relationship. Elizabeth wanted to reactivate the Ottomans against the Spanish during her war with Spain. Because of domestic political constraints and other foreign policy priorities, the Porte was unable and unwilling to oblige with a Mediterranean campaign, but the English could still hope for a certain amount of disruption through the efforts of the North African Ottoman vassals of Tunis, Tripoli and Algiers. The English also recognised that the long Ottoman-Habsburg struggle over the central European border in the 1590s diverted Habsburg funds and troops away from Spanish campaigns. Despite Ottoman inability to divert the main Spanish effort to the Mediterranean, they were still a useful weapon in the English strategic arsenal.

The establishment of an English merchant community on Ottoman territory and the extension of English diplomatic representation to the Ottoman Empire marks an important change in English policy towards the region. The English community needed access to the state administration to ensure the availability of the protection of the English Crown's authority and the threat of state military intervention on their behalf. The inevitable demand for protection led to an increased involvement of the English Crown in the area. Likewise, the rapid development of commercial opportunities on the Italian, Ottoman and North African shores of the Mediterranean gave the English authorities a direct interest in maintaining the prosperity of merchant communities in the area. This situation necessitated a subtle and gradual shift from the ad hoc diplomacy previously practised, to more sustained diplomatic representation. The potentially hostile environment and the importance of the commerce required a permanent, resident representative in the Ottoman Empire.

Such considerations help explain the establishment of an English diplomatic presence in the Ottoman Empire in 1583 and its subsequent maintenance. Whatever the financial status of the English ambassador to the Porte, there is no doubt that he acted as a state agent from

the beginning.¹

The Mediterranean Zone

The new merchant communities brought changes in the scope and emphasis of English policy towards the Mediterranean as a whole. Ralph Davis has argued convincingly that the Mediterranean complemented the Atlantic in the English economy between 1570 and 1670.² This is supported by diplomatic policy in the region. The Mediterranean was absorbed into the Atlantic region to form a larger homogenous unit as far as policy planners were concerned. This explains the ebb and flow of English naval policy in the region.

The English dilemma in considering the whole Atlantic-Mediterranean region was to determine which areas deserved priority. When Spanish, and later Dutch, expansion was at its height, ambassadorial requests for action in the Mediterranean were by and large ignored. The containment of hostile maritime activity in the Atlantic was considered the primary objective of English naval policy because it affected English security more directly, while the problem of piracy was of only secondary importance. This did not rule out activity in the Mediterranean but meant that it had to be secured by diplomatic rather than military means which made it a much cheaper option for the English Crown. The presence of an English ambassador at the Ottoman Porte who could negotiate on behalf of the Mediterranean Communities left the English Crown free to pursue its broader Atlantic policy when it was impossible to stretch resources to cover both Atlantic and Mediterranean. When the Atlantic was quiet, as in the period of Spanish cordiality between 1604 and 1625, and in the English neutrality during the 1630s, or when piracy spilled over into the Atlantic in the second decade of the seventeenth century, resources could be freed to deal with the problem of piracy in the Mediterranean.³

1 The Company funded the post of ambassador at Constantinople but he evidently had dual status as consular agent and state ambassador: see below p. 89.

2 Ralph Davis: 'England and the Mediterranean, 1570-1670' in Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England (ed.) F.J. Fisher (Cambridge, 1961) pp. 117-137

3 The issue of Mediterranean security is dealt with in detail in Chapter 7.

Problems of funding, organising and equipping English fleets limited the success of this naval policy, even with the ambitious new model navy of Oliver Cromwell. Nevertheless, as the Mediterranean was gradually integrated into Atlantic policy, the English communities in the region felt the benefit of increased protection. Cromwell's broader aim of subduing the Spanish in the West Indies was not entirely successful, since the English failed to capture Hispaniola in 1655, but Admiral Blake's attack on Tunis brought English merchants a temporary respite from the Barbary pirates.¹ This allowed the English fleet to concentrate on patrolling the Western Mediterranean in search of Spanish ships and ultimately to blockade the Spanish coast in the winter of 1657. The policy of treating the Atlantic-Mediterranean as a single security zone gave the English a wider naval presence throughout the region and by 1661 raised the profile of England as an aggressive new participant in the international arena.

Domestic Considerations and Constraints

Domestic strength was vital to allow the Crown to defend English interests abroad. The war against Spain in the 1580s and 1590s cost the Crown dear, as did James I's expenditure on establishing his court in the first decade of his reign. Crown lands were sold off, providing much needed one-off sources of funds at the expense of regular income. Income from crown lands in Elizabeth I's reign was lower in real terms than it had been before Henry VIII had sequestrated church lands.²

There were broader fiscal problems which meant that in real terms, the Crown's capacity to regulate and defend the state was declining. With the sale of its estates, the Crown depended more and more on income from taxes. Tax returns did not keep up with the general level of prices, which rose sporadically, especially from the 1540s, with prices increasing five-fold by 1600. There were several contributing factors: a growing population meant increased demand for foodstuffs and industrial goods, forcing the prices of these commodities up.

¹ See below, p. 206.

² P.K. O'Brien and P.A. Hunt: 'The Rise of a Fiscal State in England, 1485-1815' Historical Research 56 (1993) pp. 129-76, p. 153.

Scarcity of grain in bad harvests (notably those of 1549-51 and from 1594-7) also drove prices up, while monetary problems arose after debasement in the 1540s. The influx of Spanish bullion, especially after bullion raids in the 1570s and 1580s which brought large amounts of New World silver into England, caused further fiscal pressure. The Crown attempted to increase revenues from direct taxation but, as O'Brien and Hunt have established, the amount collected in real terms remained stable between 1485-1660, declining per capita until the reign of Charles I.¹

The Crown's struggle to address the inadequacy of its revenue produced friction with elements of Parliament. Conrad Russell and other 'revisionists' have established that the role of Parliament as a policy shaper has been overestimated, that Parliament was thought of as an occasional body, intended to supply the financial needs of the monarch and handle legislation, while the majority of decisions were taken by the King in Council rather than the King in Parliament.² However, in the seventeenth century, the Crown not only required funds to support its extraordinary expenditure on military campaigns but also to support its ordinary expenditure. This extra dimension gave Parliament significant power over Crown action, and its members sought concessions in return for supplying funds, as in the 1626 Parliament when members called for the impeachment of Buckingham.³

Foreign policy too could be restricted in such circumstances as elements of Parliament feared that funds supplied for military purposes would be siphoned off into the Crown's ordinary coffers. Moreover, some members of Parliament were anxious to curb the more militaristic designs of Charles and Buckingham, who wanted to pursue first an anti-Spanish

1 O'Brien & Hunt: Fiscal State, p. 168.

2 For some of the most authoritative writing on this topic, see Conrad S. Russell: 'Parliamentary History in Perspective, 1604-29' History 69 (1976); Ibid: Parliaments and English Politics 1621-29 (Clarendon, Oxford, 1979); Ibid: 'The Nature of a Parliament in Early Stuart England' in Before the Civil War (ed.) H. Tomlinson (London, 1983); Kevin Sharpe (ed.) Faction and Parliament: Essays on Early Stuart History (Clarendon, Oxford, 1978) and Mark E. Kennedy: 'Legislation, Foreign Policy and the "Proper Business" of the Parliament of 1624' Albion 23 (1991) pp. 41-60

3 See Richard Cust: The Forced Loan and English Politics 1626-28 (Clarendon, Oxford 1987) pp. 8, 20 n. 28.

and then an anti-French war which were well beyond England's means. The policy of fitting out the fleet and defending the English coast which the Parliament of 1624 voted to fund was more in keeping with the traditional priority of a defensive foreign policy.

The Ship Money Fleet

The issue of concessions made the early Stuarts more reluctant to call Parliament and forced them either to find funds elsewhere or to conduct a more diplomatic foreign policy. It is no coincidence that during Charles I's personal rule without Parliament in the 1630s, he pursued an active diplomatic policy rather than military campaigns. This switch in emphasis suggests that when Charles took control of policy after the assassination of Buckingham in 1628, he made a more realistic assessment of his position. Only when Charles found a substantial source of revenue independent of Parliament, could he contemplate funding a royal fleet. His choice of refurbishing the fleet was a defensive policy in itself. From 1625 Richelieu built up the French navy so that it appeared a potential threat to English naval freedom in the Channel and in the Atlantic-Mediterranean zone. The fiascos of the Cadiz expedition in 1625 and the failed attempt to relieve the Huguenot stronghold of La Rochelle in 1628 forced Charles to recognise the inadequacy of a royal navy which depended largely on merchant shipping. He embarked on an ambitious project to re-establish the naval balance in the region using a royal navy but the problems of funding the enterprise without Parliamentary support emphasised the weak financial position of the Crown.

In 1635, Charles extended the levy of ship money from ports to cover all towns and counties.¹ Even in its extended form, the levy, though successful at first, was not sufficient to fully equip the fleet. Without the backing of Parliament and the role its members played

¹ On the issue of ship money, see Kenneth Andrews: Ships, Money and Politics (Cambridge, 1991) Chap. 6; Kevin Sharpe: The Personal Rule of Charles I (Yale, 1992) pp. 545-98. Andrew Thrush in his article 'Naval Finance and the Origins and Development of Ship Money' in War and Government in Britain, 1598-1650 (ed.) Mark Charles Fissel (Manchester, 1991) pp. 133-62 argues convincingly that the combined funds of tonnage and poundage and ship money would have adequately funded a fleet if a large proportion of the money had not been siphoned off to maintain the king's dwindling coffers.

in promoting levies at a local level, Charles could not hope to sustain this source of income.¹ The funds he received were adequate to launch a limited expedition, but not a full campaign. Such financial constraints help explain Charles' decision to use the fleet against the Sallee Rovers of Morocco in 1636, who had been terrorising the English coasts, rather than any more ambitious venture against European powers. Despite the limits of the ship money fleet, the project demonstrates that Crown policy was beginning to shift beyond the immediate borders of the British Isles to view defence in terms of patrolling the vital sea-lanes of the Atlantic-Mediterranean.

Diplomacy under the Early Stuarts

This shift in perception of what constituted a defensive foreign policy also influenced diplomatic policy during the reigns of the early Stuarts. Both James and Charles were keen to draw the three components of their state: England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland into a more cohesive unit. James and Charles sought to prevent the creation of a Catholic 'back-door' to England through Ireland while James I's peace with Spain was partly designed to reduce the lobbying power of English Catholic exiles.² They also tried to deal with the threat to domestic stability which they perceived was posed by puritanism. To achieve such domestic stability they sought to maintain the balance between France and Spain, as predominance by either could exclude England from maritime trade routes and threaten England closer to home.

The role that the Ottoman Empire could play in distracting Spain and her allies from northern expansion eventually persuaded James to accept, somewhat reluctantly, that English representation at the Porte could be used in Crown policy. Towards the end of James I's reign, in spring 1624, Thomas Roe, then ambassador at the Porte was allowed to build on the policies he was already pursuing in line with his own Protestant commitment, to try to use the Ottoman vassal of Transylvania, led by Bethlen Gabor, to divert the Habsburgs from the Palatinate. He

1 See introductory chapter in Fissel: War and Government

2 On the details of negotiation, see A.J. Loomie: 'Toleration and Diplomacy, the Religious Issue in Anglo-Spanish Relations' Transactions of American Philosophical Society 53.6 (1963).

also engineered the breakdown of Spanish attempts to gain a truce with the Porte.¹ While Gabor's involvement was short-lived and governed by his own national ambitions, Roe's diplomacy, which carried on into Charles I's reign, and the potential effect of an Ottoman diversionary force enabled England to play a less expensive indirect role in attempting to control the balance of power in Europe.

Charles continued this indirect role, partly because it removed the problem of requiring Parliament to supply funds for military action but, more positively, because it gave England a distinct role in international affairs and himself an enhanced position among sovereigns. Charles opened his court to frequent ambassadorial visitors from all the main competitors in the European arena. He conducted his own miniature exercise in directing the balance of power by appearing at one moment to favour a Spanish alliance and at another an anti-Habsburg league. The pro-Spanish and pro-French factions at his court were, for most of the time, carefully balanced.² The creation and preparation of the ship money fleet in 1634-5 added further strength to the English position. As late as 1636, with English missions to Spain, Vienna and Paris, Charles could still play off one faction against another. Moreover, at the Porte, where the English could work more discreetly, and at the Levant Company's expense, Roe's successor, Peter Wych (1628-39) continued to press against the Habsburgs.

Domestic constraints on the active expression of foreign policy increased with the Prayer Book Rebellion of 1637 and the Scottish wars of 1639 and 1640. Charles had signed a defensive alliance against Spain with France in 1637 but became suspicious that the old alliance between the French and the Scots had been revived and that the French were interfering in the Scottish insurrection. By the end of 1638, he had turned to Spain, appealing for troops to suppress the Scottish rebellion.

However, the English were incapable of fighting on two fronts against the French and the Scots: clearly the Scottish war was their first priority. To protect England from unwelcome foreign military pressure, Charles reverted to his policy of playing the French off against the

1 On the details of these negotiations, see below chap. 9 p. 248.

2 Sharpe: Personal Rule pp. 537-41

Spanish. This worked well until October 1639 when the Dutch revealed English naval weakness by attacking the Spanish fleet in English waters, where it had sought protection.

Coinciding with this set-back in foreign policy was the collapse of the treaty of Berwick with the Scots. Charles recognised the need for a Parliament to grant funds for the inevitable second Scottish campaign. This decision dragged the king into the political mire of the Short Parliament. Nevertheless, Charles was still keen to draw a broader picture of the situation, attempting to sway the Commons to his cause by emphasising the external threat to England, exemplified by the Scottish Covenanters appeal to the French king.¹

The supposed French support for the Scottish rebels forced Charles to seek other allies, with the Spanish, in their role as counterpoise to the French, once again an obvious choice. The English negotiated a defensive treaty with the Spanish in the spring of 1640. This committed the English to a war against their growing commercial rivals, the Dutch, when they had concluded their campaign against the Scots, in return for Spanish funds.

Despite English attempts to engage foreign allies to support the Scottish campaign, any attempt to pursue foreign policy was an extension of domestic affairs. The diplomatic balancing act which Charles had attempted with some success in the years before 1639 did not entirely cease, as is evidenced by Thomas Roe's attendance at the Hamburg Conference between 1638-40 and his embassy to the diet at Ratisbon in 1641-42. Both aimed to establish a general peace and to re-establish the rights of the Elector Palatine as they had stood prior to the outbreak of hostilities in 1618. Roe's attendances were requested by Charles's sister, Elizabeth of Bohemia and Charles Lewis, Elector Palatine, in recognition of Roe's diplomatic experience and expertise. They were not a well-planned continuation of Charles's diplomatic policy and indeed, Roe was forced to return early from Ratisbon because he lacked funds to continue his work there.²

¹ See E. Cope (ed.) Proceedings of the Short Parliament of 1640 (Camden Soc., 4th Ser., 19, 1977) pp. 121-22.

² On these conferences, see E.A. Beller: 'The Mission of Sir Thomas Roe to the Conference at Hamburg, 1638-40' EHR 41 (1926) pp. 61-77; R.B. Mowat: 'The Mission of Sir Thomas Roe to Vienna in 1641-2' Ibid 25 (1910) pp. 264-75

Civil war did not become likely until Parliament asserted its rights to raise and control English troops against the Irish rebels in October 1641. From the point of view of foreign policy, however, the breakdown came much earlier. The king's concentration on the recurring Scottish problem inhibited his foreign objectives, except in so far as they affected the Scottish campaign.

Throughout the civil war period foreign policy was subsumed to the most immediate domestic war needs. The English became dormant not only in the European diplomatic field but also at the Porte. The English ambassador, Sackville Crow, whose residence (1639-47) coincided with the period between the Scottish campaign and the end of the civil war, dealt almost entirely with commercial affairs, in sharp contrast to his predecessors.

Anglo-Ottoman relations survived the domestic upheavals of the civil war period partly because the Porte was suffering from its own internal problems, and partly because the other foreign resident ambassadors at the Porte had their own troubles: Venetians relations with the Ottomans were deteriorating, culminating in war over Crete from 1645, the French ambassador was in a chronic state of debt, while the Dutch did not have a fully accredited agent at the Porte for much of this period. This was not to say that the Anglo-Ottoman relationship was not jeopardised by the civil war in England. English prestige temporarily diminished as factionalism spread to the English communities. The fiercely Royalist Crow followed orders from the king to treat the Levant merchants as rebels and sequester their goods and property in the Ottoman dominions.

Another potential threat to the relationship was Crow's refusal to accept as his legitimate successor the ambassador sent out by Parliament in 1647, Sir Thomas Bendish. Had Crow succeeded in keeping Bendish out of the embassy, England would have found herself in the unenviable position of being represented by an ambassador who flatly denied the legitimacy of the ruling authorities.

Too little has been written on the administration of foreign policy during the transfer of power from king to Commonwealth between 1647-9. It is clear from the Anglo-Ottoman case that the effects on English representation abroad warrant a study of their own. The

embassy at the Porte provides valuable evidence of the way in which Charles I's captivity was not allowed to interfere with the appointment of ambassadors vital to England's trade interests. In fact, Bendish came equipped for all eventualities, with documentation from the king, secured during his imprisonment, and from Parliament. All his instructions and letters of accreditation were sent in the king's name. Bendish was rapidly accepted by Porte and merchants alike, thus preventing any disruption of diplomatic relations.

Nevertheless, the Anglo-Ottoman relationship was relatively passive until the early 1650s when Cromwell began to assert a more cohesive foreign policy, intended to force the other major powers to recognise the legitimacy of the English Republic. The Ottoman Empire was one of the earliest states to recognise the authority of the Commonwealth, as Henry Hide's failure in 1652 to gain the ambassadorship in the name of Charles II demonstrates. The Commonwealth authorities' main aim was to shore up alliances and protect commercial interests.¹ The passing of the 1651 Navigation Act, designed to protect English shipping and disable Dutch trade, soon led to full-blown conflict with England's main trade rivals in the first Anglo-Dutch War of 1652. The English also reasserted themselves in the commercially important zones of the Atlantic-Mediterranean and Baltic. In both cases, they engaged in negotiations with the Porte: in the first case to justify naval action in the Mediterranean and prevent any English involvement in the Ottoman-Venetian war which would damage trade; in the second, the English acted as intermediaries at the Porte for Swedish territorial ambitions in central Europe to gain credit with this Baltic power.

The success of these policies will be examined in a later chapter. What was important in terms of the broad Anglo-Ottoman relationship was that, however reluctantly Whitehall acknowledged it, successive English governments continually renewed the capitulations which gave them their status at the Porte. In 1660, the first ambassador to be sent abroad by the newly restored Charles II, was Heneage Finch, second Earl of Winchilsea, as resident ambassador to the Porte. This was, admittedly, partly a reflection of the new king's suspicions

¹ For an examination of Cromwell's policy in the East Indies and particularly Japan, see Derek Massarella: "A World Elsewhere": Aspects of the Overseas Expansionist Mood of the 1650s' in Politics and People in Revolutionary England (ed.) Colin Jones (Blackwells, Oxford, 1986)

of Bendish, who had served throughout the inter-regnum, but it also demonstrated that the Crown recognised the value of the Constantinople embassy.

Throughout this period, the Anglo-Ottoman relationship was glossed over by the English because of the religious gulf between the two nations. The sense that there was something underhand about using a Muslim ally against Christian enemies persisted in English writings and attitudes.¹ Even the ambassadors at the Porte held themselves at a distance from the populace of the city in which they served.

In negotiations themselves, the situation was quite different. The English had no qualms about using the Ottoman Porte as a strategic weapon where possible, to ensure English national interests. A considerable amount of an ambassador's time was taken up with reinforcing the English position on international affairs, indirectly protecting national interests through mediating for other states, and more directly by protecting the resident communities and encouraging the Porte to take action in the European or Mediterranean areas. While the Ottoman Empire was too far from England to figure directly in policy planning, her cordiality towards the English added an extra dimension to English strategy and interests abroad. It was through the Anglo-Ottoman relationship that England learnt how to practise diplomacy with sophisticated non-European, non-Christian states as English interests spread outwards from the core Atlantic zone. Whitehall might consider the Porte a strange bed-fellow but the relationship was long-lived, surviving throughout the Ottoman period.

¹ For English attitudes, see S.C. Chew: The Crescent and the Rose (Oxford, 1937) pp. 100-49, 387-450; Brandon Beck: From the Rising of the Sun: English Images of the Ottoman Empire to 1715 (New York, 1986). Some English writers still advocated a war against the Turks to secure European unity; see Thomas Cogswell: The Blessed Revolution: English Politics and the Coming of War 1621-24 (Cambridge, 1989) pp. 20-22.

THE VIEW FROM THE PORTE

The Ottoman Empire, too, was concerned with its own security during this period. By the time the English arrived at the Porte, the Ottomans had reached a halt in their drive to control the Mediterranean. Their last gain had been Cyprus in 1571 and they were not to attempt a major naval campaign of conquest until the long war with Venice over Crete from 1645-69 which dominated diplomatic policy in the final years of this period.

This hiatus in maritime expansion did not signify a decline in the Ottoman Empire. It is true that the Ottomans had apparently reached the limits of their supply lines at Vienna in 1529 when they found themselves constrained by the rapid arrival of winter, and at Malta in 1565 when they suffered from internal divisions amongst the naval commanders. Nevertheless, their defeat on both occasions had not been so humiliating as to prevent another attempt and the Ottoman threat continued to loom high over central Europe.

By the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the Ottoman state was concerned to consolidate the rapid expansion achieved under Selim I (1512-20) and Suleiman (1520-66). Particular attention was paid to border areas as these were obvious points of vulnerability.

The Western Borders

In Europe, Ottoman desire to shore up its borders lay behind the inconclusive war along the Hungarian border in 1593-1606.¹ The war ended when the Porte agreed to sign the treaty of Zsitvatorok, recognising the Holy Roman Emperor. Several historians have viewed this as a sign of decline, as the Ottoman Empire's first major diplomatic compromise.² Nevertheless, despite the rhetoric of the treaty, the Porte undoubtedly attained its own goal:

1 The Porte had made strenuous efforts to avoid this conflict but considered Habsburg intransigence over tribute payments and illegal territorial advances too great a threat to ignore. On diplomatic negotiations leading up to the war, see Gustav Bayerle: Ottoman Diplomacy in Hungary, 1590-93 (Indiana University, 1972) pp. 1-12.

2 See Fernand Braudel: The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II (trans. Sian Reynolds) 2 Vol. (London, 1973) II p. 802.

the restriction of fortification along the Hungarian border.¹

Ottoman policy also centred on the vassal states of Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia, which formed a buffer zone between Habsburg territory and the Ottoman patrimony. Although the Ottoman state did not normally interfere with the local running of its vassal states, it did seek to control their rulers to prevent any alliance with the Habsburgs, especially after Transylvania took up arms for the Habsburgs in the 'Long War' of 1593-1606.

The Porte was helped by Protestant and Orthodox influences in the region, which could create a natural barrier between the border states and their Catholic Habsburg neighbour, although this was not always the case.² The Ottomans also received diplomatic support in their negotiations with these vassal states from the English and the Dutch at the Porte. The English and Dutch were eager to maintain the current balance of power and prevent further erosion of the Protestant states in central Europe.³ However, the Porte faced increasingly hostility from vassal leaders who wanted more independence from the Porte, especially in Transylvania.⁴ This reached a climax during Mehmet Köprülü's vizierate (1656-61), when, in 1658, the Ottomans staged a military campaign aimed at bringing Transylvania under more direct control.

The Porte also exerted control over its vassals by economic means. The areas of Hungary under Ottoman control were depopulated by the frequent cross-border campaigns, while internal markets were directed to provide food for Ottoman troops permanently

1 For a review of traditional views of the treaty and a careful analysis of its actual ratification, see G. Bayerle: 'The Compromise at Zsitvatorok' Archivum Ottomanicum VI (1980) pp. 5-55

2 Laszlo Makkai argues that there was a break-down of religious ideology in politics in Transylvania, where the Council consisted of members of both Catholic and Protestant dominations. During the 'Long War' many Catholic aristocrats saw the Turks as a means of maintaining their positions in the face of Habsburg territorial aspirations, while a Protestant group saw Habsburg protection as a way to win more autonomy. See 'The Crown and the Diets of Hungary and Transylvania' in Crown, Church and Estates: Central European Politics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century (Ed.) R.J.W. Evans & T.V. Thomas (London, 1991) pp. 80-91

3 For English involvement, see below chap. 9.

4 On Transylvania's struggle for national autonomy, see Peter F. Sugar (Ed.) A History of Hungary (Indiana University, 1990) pp. 83-99; 100-120; 121-37

stationed on the border.¹ Moldavia was also regulated, forced to sell grain to Constantinople at an artificially low price to ensure the capital was adequately supplied.² The Balkan peninsula and Black Sea coast were expected to reserve a large part of their surplus production in grain, livestock, dairy goods and timber to supply the Ottoman capital.³

This policy brought the border regions into line with Anatolian provinces and suggests that the Porte was trying to integrate these areas more fully into the Ottoman system. It hoped to make the region inter-dependent with the Ottoman Empire, but in fact, the Porte became increasingly dependent on these areas for supplies.

Ottoman Security Measures Against Border Raids

The need to maintain supply routes with the central European and Balkan regions imposed a still greater military burden on the Porte. The Dalmatian and Black Sea ports which channelled goods from these regions were subject to raids from various hinterland military communities. The Dalmatian coast was raided by the Uskoks, semi-professional bandits based in Senj. They were partially funded by the Habsburgs who used them to maintain the Western defences of their territory. They also terrorised the shipping lanes of the Adriatic.⁴

In the Black Sea area, it was the nomadic Crimean/Ukrainian Cossacks who raided ports and committed acts of piracy. They were loosely controlled by the Polish king, who used them to neutralise Tatar raids and Ottoman expansion along his own borders.⁵ The raids also forced fur caravans from Moscow to the Porte to take longer, more secure land routes to

1 The Ottoman Empire controlled a large area of Hungary during this period, with only the North Western region lying under Habsburg control.

2 See Orest Subtelny: Domination of Eastern Europe: Native Nobilities and Foreign Absolutism 1500-1715 (Kingston/Montreal, 1986) p. 40

3 See Traian Stoianovich: 'The Conquering Orthodox Merchant' Jnl. Econ. Hist. XX (1960) pp. 234-313, pp. 235-41

4 On the organisation and activities of the Uskoks, see Catherine Wendy Bracewell: The Uskoks of Senj (Cornell University, 1992).

5 On the function of Cossacks within Polish society, see Subtelny: Domination of Eastern Europe pp. 41-47.

Constantinople.¹ In the early seventeenth century, the Cossack threat increased, with several raids reaching Constantinople.

The Porte used different tactics against each of these communities. In the case of the Uskoks, it put pressure on Venice, which had used them against the Ottomans in the wars of 1537-9 and 1570-3. The Ottomans argued that the continuance of Uskok raids was a breach of the peace settlement made after the 1570-73 war. They threatened to retaliate by sending a fleet to the Adriatic if the Venetians did not control the Uskoks. The Venetians, fearing the loss of their trade privileges, made various attempts to deal with the Uskoks by direct naval action against them and through diplomatic channels with the Habsburgs. They did not fully succeed until 1617-18, when the treaties of Madrid and Wiener-Neustadt compelled the Habsburgs to remove the Uskoks from the border and destroy their ships.

Although the Uskok threat was not entirely removed from the Ottoman borders, it was quelled until the Ottoman-Venetian war (1645-69) when the Uskoks once again supported the Venetians along the Dalmatian front. That the Porte could successfully deal with the Uskok problem by putting pressure on the Venetians shows that Ottoman trade was valued by the Venetians and that the Porte recognised that it could not control all its borders single-handed.

In the case of the Crimean Cossacks, the Porte had to act more directly. It sent a large fleet to the Black Sea each summer to patrol the coasts for Cossack raiders. These had mixed success, with the Ottomans losing the strategic port of Azov, which controlled entry to the Black Sea in the autumn of 1637 to the Cossacks.² The increase in Cossack raids kept the Ottomans from the Mediterranean, at least as far as major campaigns went, in the first decades of the seventeenth century.

Another strand of Ottoman policy against the Cossacks was to use another nomadic

1 See Alexandre Bennigsen & Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejay: 'Les Marchands de la Cour Ottomane et le Commerce des fourrures Moscovites dans la Seconde Moitié du XVIe Siecle' Cahiers du Monde Russe et Sovietique XI.3 (1970) pp. 363-90, p. 374.

2 Azov had been under growing pressure from the Cossacks, under Muscovite influence, since the 1550s. See A.N. Kurat: 'The Turkish Expedition to Astrakhan in 1569 and the Problem of the Don Volga Canal' Slavonic and East European Review 40 (1961-2) pp. 7-23. In 1641, it was captured from the Cossacks by the Russians, who returned it to the Porte two years later.

mercenary group, the Crimean Tatars to distract the Cossacks from the Black Sea.¹ While this was quite successful, there was always the danger that the two groups would cooperate in joint raids. The Ottomans, in line with their European counterparts, increasingly tried to bring their mercenary border communities into the state orbit by imposing vassal status upon them. They were less successful at this than the Habsburgs, Muscovites and Poles, and thus the Tatars continued to add further instability to the Crimea.

The Mediterranean Boundary

Although the Ottoman fleet did not attempt another major Mediterranean conquest until the 1640s, the Porte was still concerned to secure the Mediterranean for supply ships from its North African markets and for the coastal trade with the Balkans. It continued to use the Barbary states to patrol the western Mediterranean and encouraged raids on the Italian and Spanish coasts to prevent interference by Spanish fleets. The Porte experienced problems controlling its North African vassals and restricting their raiding activities to legitimate targets, but they continued to play an important function in monitoring shipping in the western Mediterranean.

The Porte was also concerned to attract strong military allies and, although the English and Ottomans never took joint action against the Spanish, the Porte considered England a potential deterrent to Spanish interference in the Mediterranean. Likewise, when England showed signs of cordiality towards the Spanish between 1603-24, the Porte was anxious to maintain formal relations to prevent Anglo-Hispanic cooperation against its North African vassals.

In the eastern Mediterranean, the Porte depended on its own fleet, commanded by the Kapudan Paşa, and on a series of economic regulations to control shipping activity close to the Ottoman heartlands. The Porte laid down restrictions on trading in corn and other foodstuffs and materials needed for supplying Constantinople. This prevented foreign merchants from

¹ On Tatar military role, see L.J.D. Collins: 'The Military Organisation of the Crimean Tatars during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century' in V.J. Parry & M.E. Yapp (Eds.): War, Technology and Society in the Middle East (London, 1975) pp. 257-76.

taking over the local supply trade of the Porte. The extent to which the Porte enforced these regulations depended on the zeal of each Kapudan Paşa. It is clear from the frequent complaints of foreign merchants that by the 1620s and 1630s, the eastern mediterranean was extremely well patrolled.

The movement of foreign armed merchant vessels around this zone continued to be a cause for concern. The Ottomans attempted to limit the threat by prohibiting ships from approaching a port in a hostile manner or using a port to act as firing cover. This was difficult to enforce with a blanket regulation and was one reason why the Porte was keen for western nations to maintain resident ambassadors. They could be held accountable for actions by their nation's ships and act as a channel through which Ottoman grievances could be redressed.

The vulnerability of Ottoman supply ports and lines was clearly demonstrated during the Ottoman-Venetian war (1645-69) when Venice successfully blockaded the Dardanelles and prevented grain ships from Alexandria reaching the Porte. The Ottoman authorities gradually recognised that it could no longer concentrate on maintaining supply lines through the Mediterranean and Black Sea while pursuing a major naval campaign. Once the Cretan campaign was concluded, the Ottoman fleet contented itself with the role of patrolling the Aegean and Black Sea waters.

The Eastern Boundaries

To the east, the Porte was preoccupied on its border with the Safavids. They posed a threat to Ottoman stability because of their expansionist aspirations in Central Asia and attempts to influence the population of eastern Anatolia. This led to war in the late 1570s and 1580s. The Ottomans sought to contain the Safavid threat by establishing a buffer zone in the Caucasus and protecting the sunni Uzbeks along the Caspian basin. They also had a secondary goal of controlling the important east-west trade routes and the silk centres of the Caspian, to increase Ottoman revenue.

Between 1578-90, the Ottomans built a string of defences from Kars to Tiflis and took control of Derbend on the Caspian Sea. Their progress was rapid because of Safavid

internal struggles, and was ratified by a treaty in 1590. Success at securing the eastern border was short-lived, as Shah Abbas resolved his difficulties by 1603. A new threat presented itself when the Safavids attempted a military alliance with the Habsburgs. Although this failed through poor communications, the Shah's determination to fight forced the Ottomans into battle on two fronts. From 1603-8, the Safavids were able to take back the Ottoman conquests rapidly, benefiting from the unpopularity of Ottoman military rule in the region and Ottoman preoccupation with its western enemy.

The Safavids retained this territory even after the Ottoman-Habsburg treaty of Zsitvatorok in 1606 brought peace in the west because of Ottoman battle fatigue and the particular geographic difficulties which an eastern campaign brought. After years of ineffective Ottoman campaigning in the East, resulting in an unsuccessful siege of Baghdad in 1623, Murad IV successfully reorganised the offensive against the Safavids in the 1630s, capturing Baghdad and securing a treaty which left Baghdad and Kars in Ottoman hands in 1639. The sultan saw this campaign as a way to secure control in the eastern provinces and employ the restive army. The breadth of his vision is demonstrated by his attempts to force the Safavids to defend both western and eastern flanks. He tried to involve Moghul India in the struggle, claiming a joint sunni right to remove shia heretics.¹

The defence of the Ottoman Empire's borders and the uninterrupted supply of Constantinople were the priorities of Ottoman foreign policy. The Porte was also preoccupied with internal change and turmoil, which dictated the way in which it organised its foreign policy and conducted business with the foreign merchant communities resident in its ports.

The Sense of Decline

Although there was no major decline in Ottoman power in this period, there was a shift in the orientation and execution of policy. This change was noticeable to many Ottoman writers who considered it a corruption of the old system and feared it was leading to a decline

¹ See Riazul Islam: Calendar of Documents on Indo-Persian Relations (1500-1750) 2 Vol (Tehran, 1979) II p. 310 Letter from Sultan to Jehangir, 1625.

in the state.¹

The first complaint was that the Ottoman state had lost its way and its leadership in abandoning its policy of continual conquest. Ottoman writers were particularly bitter about the increased seclusion of the sultan from political and military affairs in the early seventeenth century.

It was true that sultans were generally less able than their predecessors in this period. Having been brought up in the Palace, they lacked the regional administrative experience that sultan's sons had received up until Mehmed III's reign (1596-1603). This change in the training had arisen because of the problems of controlling heirs to the throne once they gained a regional power base. Selim II, who had become heir to the throne only after a bitter struggle with his brother Bayezid, had attempted to deal with the problem by educating only one prince in the provinces. Mehmed III was even more cautious and trained none.

Part of the problem was that princes were not only denied the broader education and experience which service in the provinces provided but were increasingly subjected to the so called *Kafes* (Cage), a set of apartments reserved for potential heirs to the throne. This led to a growing internalisation in the Ottoman Porte; several sultans, most notably Mustafa I (1617-18, 1622-23) and Ibrahim I (1640-48), were undoubtedly affected by their isolated confinement. The introduction of the *Kafes* system also marked a change from the established custom of fratricide, whereby a sultan killed all brothers, as potential rivals, on his accession. The *Kafes* system, which existed alongside fratricide in the early seventeenth century, had constitutional advantages because it saved the state from the bloody civil wars among princes contesting their father's throne, and enabled brothers as well as sons to succeed to the Ottoman throne. Nevertheless, the perpetuation of the system, which gradually supplanted fratricide, was directly responsible for a series of sultans incapable of looking beyond the narrow confines of their own court.

The administrative disabilities of the sultans were compounded by several periods of

¹ See Bernard Lewis: 'Some Reflections on the Decline of the Ottoman Empire' *Studia Islamica* 9(1958) pp. 111-27.

minority rule, which allowed factionalism to rise in the Palace system, especially in the reign of Osman (1618-22), in the early years of Murad IV's reign before his reassertion of the authority of the sultan in the 1630s and in the so-called Sultanate of the Ağas (1648-51) on the accession of Mehmed IV.

Despite these obvious handicaps in leadership, the sultanate did not experience a complete decline during this period. Murad IV proved an able ruler when he reached his majority. Moreover, while the sultan had an important role to play as the figurehead of the state, the expanded state had grown beyond that of a mere household administration, and required a number of men skilled in different spheres of policy-making. That the sultan increasingly left the day-to-day management of domestic and foreign policy to his deputies was not always a mark of failure but more a realisation that his role in the state must be adapted to suit its enlarged size. As I shall show in later chapters, when an able sultan wanted to become involved in the detail of state affairs, he could still make final policy decisions.

The shift away from the sultan's personal control of military and domestic policy concerned Ottoman writers because it gave growing importance to the principal officers of the state, the sultan's deputies. Chief of these was the Grand Vizier, who, as the sultan's proxy, was responsible for leading the divan and military campaigns. Since he was frequently absent from Constantinople on campaign, his administrative deputy, the *Kaymakam* also rose to prominence. The *Mufti* of Istanbul, the *Şeyhülislâm*, who was responsible for interpreting the religious law, also played a role in policy-making.¹ Finally, the *Kapudan Paşa* (High Admiral) who was responsible for naval policy and the defence of Istanbul became another adviser on foreign policy. The officials who held these positions were frequently changed and the influence of each office varied according to the strength of the individual who held it. In many ways, as the English experience of Ottoman officials illustrates, policy was determined by an individual and could fall with him, or he fall because of his policies.

Contemporary commentators also noticed an increased bureaucratisation of the state.

¹ The role of the *Mufti* demonstrates the lip-service which even the sultans paid to the pre-eminence of the Sharia.

In reality, the administration of the state had been expanding ever since the Mehmed II had decided to establish his capital in Constantinople, rather than moving it forward with the momentum of conquest. This gave the Empire a permanent centre and created the problem of supplying it. As the state continued to expand, so did the administrative mechanisms which were needed to collect funds for the war effort and to link provinces and occupied territories with the sultan's ever-growing household administration in Constantinople.¹

Problems with the Army

The expansion of the first half of the sixteenth century slowed in the second because the development of new weapons technology and war strategy in Europe made the Ottoman army less capable of rapid conquest. The Porte needed more, better equipped troops to be able to cope with the siege warfare tactics and fire-arms of their European counterparts. As infantry equipped with fire-arms became increasingly prominent at the expense of more cheaply-equipped cavalry, so expenditure on equipment also increased. The Ottoman state deputised its provincial governors to provide such expensive weapons but this reduced central control over military equipment in the provinces.²

The most immediate concern for the Ottoman state was to maintain stability both internally and along its borders. To do this required a large standing army and the funds to pay it. The existence of an Ottoman standing army is in sharp contrast to the English, who did not maintain a standing army until the creation of Cromwell's new model army in the 1640s. Previously, the English relied on ad hoc forces and local militia paid for largely by local levies.³

In the late sixteenth century, there was a clear military need to increase Ottoman revenue, to bring it into line with state expenditure which had risen rapidly as the state

1 On the development of bureaucratic consciousness, see Cornell H. Fleischer: Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600) (Princeton, 1986) Chap. 8

2 See Ronald C. Jennings: 'Firearms, Bandits and Gun Control' Archivum Ottomanicum 6 (1980) pp. 340-58; Halil İnalcık: 'The Socio-Political Effects of the Diffusion of Firearms in the Middle East' in Parry & Yapp: War pp. 194-217, pp. 200-1.

3 See O'Brien and Hunt: Fiscal State, p. 135.

expanded. The financial strains of this increased military expenditure were compounded by a worsening economic situation and the need to channel revenue to the state treasury and provisions to supply state personnel. The Ottoman treasury desperately needed to raise funds and reorganised the traditional fief system to do so.

Previously, soldiers and officials had been rewarded for successful campaigns with *dirlikler* (state landed tax-units), an inexpensive method of retaining the loyalty and service of troops. The availability of such fiefs had already diminished as Ottoman conquests slowed. Then, from the late sixteenth century, *sipahis* who administered the fiefs found themselves dispossessed as the Porte stopped regranting fiefs and handed them over to tax farmers for cash payments. *Sipahis* resentment at their economic dislocation was evident in several provincial rebellions, most notably the Celali revolts of 1596-1610 and by urban riots, such as that of 1591 in Constantinople, where many landless *sipahis* flocked.

In addition to the growing expense of maintaining the military might which was the backbone of Ottoman expansion, there was a concomitant decline in janissary standards which reduced the ability of the Ottoman army. In the first half of the sixteenth century, the janissary corps had been small and efficient. By Selim II's reign (1566-74), however, the sultan was forced to open up membership of the janissary corp to native-born Turks, some of whom were married or held jobs, thus developing local ties and guild associations. These were less willing to fight, but expected to be compensated financially when there were no major campaigns. The janissary corps increased from 8,000 men in 1527 to 27,000 in 1609 which created a major expense for the Porte in return for few military conquests. The size of the janissary corps and the new urban allegiances which its guild associations brought made it a force to be reckoned with in Constantinople. They began to take a more active role in the political life of the capital and in 1589 successfully forced the Porte to back down and execute several palace officials whom they held responsible. This was the first time that the Porte had to hand over palace officials to the mob but this soon became a regular custom, reaching its first climax in 1622 when the janissaries engineered the assassination of the sultan, Osman.

Sending the army on campaigns in the east from 1623-39 was only a temporary

solution to the problem, as the janissaries were just as likely to mutiny away from the capital and still required payment for their service. The Ottoman state had to find new ways of raising revenue to satisfy janissary demands and to provide for its military commitments.

Economic Problems

The opening of diplomatic and commercial relations with selected western nations was one attempt to solve the problem. The trading relationship with the Venetians, which the Ottoman state had inherited from its Byzantine predecessor, demonstrated the value of customs revenue. When the French joined the Venetians at the Porte in 1569, the Ottoman state became aware of the potential of expanded trade relations. The English brought even greater trade benefits when they arrived at the Porte. In addition to the customs duties which they paid, as a Protestant state, they were free from the Papal decree banning arms exports to the Ottoman Empire. In the Elizabethan era especially, they played a dual role of boosting trade revenue and supplying sophisticated arms and raw materials used in gun production. In the seventeenth century, the English authorities tried to restrict the export of materials such as tin, but the English willingness to supply arms and military materials was a key factor in their rapid acceptance at the Porte.

Of course, expanding overseas trade did not solve all the monetary problems of the state, and indeed created new fiscal problems as it opened the Ottoman Empire to the flow of Spanish bullion from South America. The Ottoman Empire, along with other nations which did not trade directly with Spain, felt the inflationary effects of the influx of Spanish gold and silver only in the final decades of the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, by the 1580s, a glut of Spanish coins in Italy made the Ottoman markets a target for Venetian traders. They could purchase raw materials cheaply and sell their own goods at relatively high prices. It is likely that the attractiveness of Ottoman markets brought the English to the Porte at the same time.¹

¹ The English had traded with the Porte earlier in the sixteenth century but direct trade declined in the 1550s and 1560s when the English traded via Venice or Antwerp instead. See T.S. Willan: 'Some Aspects of the English Trade with the Levant in the Sixteenth Century' *EHR* LXX (1955) pp. 399-410, pp. 400-404. The new formal capitulatory arrangements which the French had obtained in 1569 were also an incentive to English merchants.

The influx of coins brought about price rises. As prices rose and more coins were needed, Ottoman merchants were forced to accept Spanish riyals as legitimate payment for goods. This created an inflationary spiral of rising volumes of coinage followed by price rises.¹ The Porte did attempt to deal with this economic imbalance by devaluing the coinage between 1587-9 but its main aim was to ensure the supply of Constantinople and it regulated the economy accordingly.² This handicapped local merchants since foreign merchants were prepared to pay much higher prices, as goods were still cheap by western standards, and also led to urban discontent in Constantinople.³

An additional problem was that the continual devaluation of the coinage and accompanying inflation until *circa* 1650 particularly affected the price of agricultural produce. Grain prices rose about 500% between 1550 and 1650 and contributed to rural unrest in Anatolia.⁴ In the sixteenth century, this was accompanied by a rapid population increase. Although this levelled out during the seventeenth century, the enlarged population put greater inflationary pressure on already limited food supplies.

One of the problems for the rural population of Anatolia, and for the state, was that as the population increased, units of land became further sub-divided between families and, in the harsh conditions of the Anatolian plateau, less productive. With no new land conquests to increase production potential, some peasants were forced off the land. Some became rural mercenaries, contributing to the decline of the Anatolian provinces, most went in search of

1 For greater detail on this complex subject, see Ömer-Lutfi Barkan: 'The Price Revolution in the Sixteenth Century: A Turning Point in the Economic History of the Near East' *IJMES* 6 (1975) pp. 3-28; Robert W. Olson: 'The Sixteenth Century Price Revolution and its Effect on the Ottoman Empire and on Ottoman-Safavid Relations' *Acta Orientalia* 37 (1976) pp. 45-55; Halil İnalcık: 'Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire 1600-1700' *Archivum Ottomanicum* 6 (1980) pp. 283-337.

2 See Serif Mardin: 'Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 11 (1969) pp. 258-81, p. 262.

3 See Daniel Goffman: *Izmir and the Levantine World, 1550-1650* (University of Washington, 1990) p. 71-74.

4 Jack A. Goldstone: 'East and West in the Seventeenth Century: Political Crises in Stuart England, Ottoman Turkey and Ming China' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30 (1988) pp. 103-42, p. 108

the security and prospects of towns. This created the illusion of population pressure in the towns because even when population growth slowed, the towns remained densely populated. In contrast, rural villages and farms which were needed to supply the towns were underpopulated or deserted.

At the same time, the *reaya* (taxpaying subjects) felt the squeeze of central efforts to increase taxes after a long period when tax assessments had fallen well behind both prices and output.¹ They also suffered from additional taxes which the Porte used to repay forced loans extracted from the wealthy during monetary crises.

Another problem associated with the price rises was that it cost provincial officials more to maintain their accustomed retinue. They also had to retain bands of mercenaries to meet the state's expectations that they could supply troops for any emergencies. The pressure on officials to enlarge their retinues forced them to exploit their peasant holdings. Provincial *paşas* could raise local taxes only in times of special need and with the sultan's permission. The state of continual military alert in which the Ottoman Empire remained throughout the seventeenth century, enabled provincial officers to plead special need in their extortions.

The Porte's dependence on the provinces for military supplies and revenue gave greater power to local officials and made them reluctant to give up their positions. The support they received from their mercenary troops encouraged them to fight to retain the local power-base they had built up and contributed to a decrease in the control which the central administration held over the provinces between *circa* 1623 and 1658.²

The Porte and the Foreign Resident Communities

This morass of social and economic problems affected the Porte's relations with the foreign resident communities. It soon realised that the favourable terms it had offered to attract western traders to the Porte had substantial draw-backs. The merchants were

¹ See İnalcık: Fiscal Transformation p. 336.

² For struggle between central administrators and local magnates, see Goldstone: 'East and West' p. 50.

benefitting far more from the Levant trade than the Porte. The merchants clearly were in a privileged position. Their customs dues were small and static, and even though local officials continually charged double duty on goods which had already paid at the port of entry, the merchants still found the trade profitable.

Throughout the seventeenth century, Porte officials and local officers attempted to redress the balance by bringing the merchant communities into line with the *reaya* (taxpaying subjects) and *zimmi* (non-muslim taxpaying subjects) of the Ottoman Empire. They were not particularly successful in this because of the strength of ambassadorial representation. More importantly, customs increases and tax impositions by the Porte could be matched with the far greater threat of the removal of western trade, especially in the light of Safavid attempts to divert foreign trade from the Porte to Ispahan.¹ The Porte was just as concerned to prevent the English from supplying arms to the Safavids in return for silk privileges as it was to maintain English trade in the Levant.

The Porte gradually recognised that it could not regard the foreign merchant communities simply as extensions of its own subject population. Nevertheless, it kept a tight rein on the privileges it had granted, ensuring that any extensions were only granted with promises of mutual benefits or hefty bribes to help replenish the state treasury. It was entirely motivated by the necessity of the state both in its commercial and diplomatic relations. It was because the English seemed to offer so much by their presence, and threaten so much in their absence, on both points that they rose to pre-eminence at the Porte by 1660.

¹ See Robert W. Ferrier: 'The Terms and Conditions under which the English Trade was Transacted with Safavid Persia' *B.SOAS* 49 (1986) pp. 48-66.

PART I
PLACING THE ENGLISH AMBASSADORS IN THEIR ENVIRONMENT

CHAPTER I. THE FUNCTIONS OF COURT CEREMONIAL AND GIFT GIVING IN THE OTTOMAN COURT AS IT AFFECTED THE ENGLISH EMBASSY

When the English established direct diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Porte in 1583, their first task was to adapt to the sophisticated system of imperial etiquette through which the Porte operated. An understanding and acceptance of certain ceremonies and conventions was vital to the survival and promotion of English interests at the Porte.

There has been a reluctance on the part of early modern historians to use ceremonial as a means of understanding diplomacy. Those who are prepared to refer to ceremonial use it in a limited way. William Roosen has explored the attitude of diplomatic historians and suggests that there are two schools: those who describe but do not explain the ceremonial of a society, and those who concentrate on the significance of a ceremony and ignore its form.¹ In fact, when dealing with the status of the English in their diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Porte, it is important to consider both the form and significance of court ceremonial.

An analysis of the forms of ceremonial demonstrates the differences and the concomitant difficulties of manoeuvring a path through the etiquette of a sophisticated non-Christian culture, while the significance of the ceremonial sets the English Embassy within its operational environment. Diplomatic ceremonial acts as a 'barometer for long-term relationships between states and rulers' and, in the case of the English representatives at the Porte, can be easily measured from the numerous eye-witness accounts of court ceremonial involving the English ambassador.²

The first function of the complex protocol of the Porte was to impress the magnificence and power of the Ottoman sultan both on a domestic audience and on foreign visitors. It did this through a variety of ceremonies, several of which directly involved foreign diplomatic representatives. The second function was to control access to the sultan and to set

¹ William Roosen: 'Early Modern Diplomatic Ceremonial: A Systems Approach' *JMH* 52 (1980) pp. 452-76, pp. 452-56

² Roosen: *Diplomatic Ceremonial* pp. 464-65

foreign ambassadors within the Ottoman concept of order. This function was most clearly seen in the imperial audience.¹

The Ottoman etiquette system was not merely a passive device designed to reflect and express the power of the sultan. It required an active response from foreign representatives so that the performance of an ambassador and his retinue at each ceremony could determine the success or failure of his mission. Indeed, the Ottoman adaptation of mixed eastern traditions made the appearance of ceremonial so different from the established norms of the West that it presented a challenge to the diplomatic skill of successive ambassadors.

The Roots of Ottoman Ceremonial and the Theory of Social Order

The etiquette system of the Porte had developed from several cultural traditions. There were links with Arabic-Persian practice, through the literary culture in which the Ottoman Empire shared and through the Byzantine tradition which had itself been influenced by its Arab neighbours. The most notable link was the concept of the seclusion of the sultan, given physical expression by the separation of the Topkapi Saray from the city of Constantinople. It is also probable that the custom of investing officials with a robe when they took up a new appointment shared some roots with both Mamluk and Byzantine practice. Tributary elements can be traced to the influence of the Mongol Khanate and Ottoman roots in the tribes of Central Asia.²

The amalgam of Ottoman ceremonial forms was crystallized some time between 1477-81 in the so-called Kanunname of Mehmed II. This 'law-code' was actually a book of

¹ See below p. 56.

² There is no major work tracing the roots of Ottoman ceremonial but comparisons with Byzantine traditions are made in Speros Vryonis: 'The Byzantine Legacy and Ottoman Forms' Dumbarton Oaks Papers 23-24 (1969-70) pp. 251-309 while Gülru Necipoğlu's Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: The Topkapi Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries (London, 1991) has a useful summary of Ottoman adaptation of Byzantine ceremonial, see pp. 16-17, 50-51, 251-52. Some useful works on the form of Central Asian diplomacy are Edward L. Keenan: 'Muscovy and Kazan: Some Introductory Remarks on the Pattern of Steppe Diplomacy' Slavic Review 26 (1967) pp. 548-58; Jaroslaw Pelenski: 'State and Society in Muscovite Russia and the Mongol-Turkic System in the Sixteenth Century' Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte 27 (1980) pp. 157-67; Charles J. Halperin: Russia and the Golden Horde (London, 1985).

regulations governing etiquette and status at the Porte and was, in itself, a reflection of the assimilation of ceremonial similar to the tenth century Book of Ceremonies of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, and the Imperial codes of the Turco-Mongol Khanate. Although these laws formalised Ottoman etiquette, the system had evolved by the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century to take account of the changing administrative structure and the increasing diplomatic traffic at the Porte.¹

The Ottoman Empire had also developed its own theory of social power, that of spheres of influence, which was reflected in its ceremonial. This concept was rooted in a combination of the idea of a circle of justice surrounding the head of the nation, and the Islamic idea of widening circles which bound the various strata of society to the head. These were the ties of *akrabalık* (blood relationship), *cins* (ethnic ties) and *intisab* (client-patron relationship). Carter Findley has further defined this theory, suggesting that, the social organisation of the Ottoman Empire resembled that of the extended family, in which the sultan played the role of the head of the household. The ruling class (*askeri*) assumed the position of servants, while the subject or 'producing' class (*reaya*) resembled those with a distant claim to family membership who were given protection by a household head.²

1 The dating of the Kanunname has raised controversy. Konrad Dilger suggests that anachronisms for Mehmed II's reign point to a later date, probably in Suleiman's reign. See Konrad Dilger: 'Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Osmanische Hofzeremoniells im Funfzehn und Sechzehn Jahrhundert' Beitrage zur Kenntnis Sud-Osteuropas und des Nahen Orients 4 (Munich, 1967). I prefer Necipoğlu's theory in Architecture that the anachronisms represent latter interpolations as this mirrors the evolution of the Byzantine Book of Ceremonies. See Avril Cameron: 'The Construction of Court Ritual: The Byzantine Book of Ceremonies' in David Cannadine & Simon Price (Eds.): Rituals of Royalty, Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies (Past and Present Soc., 1987) pp. 106-36; J.B. Bury: 'the Ceremonial Book of Constantine Porphyrogenetos' EHR XXII (1907) pp. 209-27, 417-39. I am grateful to James Howard-Johnson and his classes on Constantine Porphyrogenitus for clarifying this process. In another context, Richard C. Repp found evidence that Mehmed II's Kanunname had been amended throughout the sixteenth century in relation to the salaries of *kadıks*. See The Mufti of Istanbul (London, 1986) pp. 33-36. It is clear that the Ottoman code had become more sophisticated by the time the English arrived at the Porte.

2 Carter V. Findley: 'The advent of Ideology in the Islamic Middle East' (part 1) SI LV (1982) pp. 143-69, pp. 156-57

Foreign Ambassadors and the Ottoman System

Into this complex theoretical model had to be fitted foreign ambassadors who represented something of an anomaly, having no ties of religion and not conforming to Ottoman social patterns and customs.¹ The Ottoman state seems to have resolved this problem by regarding foreign ambassadors, at best, as honoured guests and, at worst, as in a tributary relationship with the Porte. Resident foreign ambassadors posed a greater problem to the theoretical order and seem to have been absorbed into an honorary '*askeri*' role, since they did not pay taxes. Another aspect of '*askeri*' status, however, was that members held state appointments, and it is apparent from both the ceremonial and from occasional practical situations, that the Porte extended this state-servant concept to resident foreign ambassadors.² This conflicted with Western requirements for ambassadors: thus one of the continual problems for English ambassadors at the Porte was to maintain a distance from domestic Ottoman politics without upsetting the delicate social position in which they found themselves.

In addition to this theory of social order which framed Ottoman society, the Ottoman Empire had a very different concept of diplomacy from Western States. In essence, the concept of world superiority, which the Ottoman military society of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries had believed in, had become enshrined in Ottoman diplomacy in the form of non-reciprocity.³ In contrast to the motives driving the English to open direct diplomatic relations with the Porte, the Ottoman Empire was relatively unconcerned about establishing its own representatives in the West. Interest in commercial matters was limited to a desire for trade with Western nations in the form of trade exchange on Ottoman soil. Ottoman political interest in the West was restricted to the need to sustain an equilibrium along its borders to

1 For this definition of 'Ottoman', see Metin I. Kunt: 'Ethno-regional Solidarity (Cins) in the Seventeenth Century Ottoman Establishment' *IJMES* V (1974) pp. 233-39, p. 234 n. 2.

2 On Western definitions of diplomatic status, see below p. 146 ff.

3 Osman Turan: 'The Ideal of World Domination Among the Medieval Turks' *SI* (1955) pp. 77-90.

maintain its Ottoman territorial 'patrimony'.¹

The Porte shared the same concerns of foreign policy as Western nations but its priority was protecting its borders especially those in the east. Christine Woodhead has shown that conflict with the Shi'a Safavids of Persia was the main concern for the Porte, despite the continual battle with Habsburg forces in the buffer-zone of Central Europe.² This eastern alignment of policy was reflected in the ceremonial hierarchy of the Porte. It was illustrated in August 1612, when Paul Pindar (1612-20) reported that the Safavid Ambassador was highest in Ahmed I's consideration of ambassadors.³ It was repeated in 1639 when Sackville Crow (1639-47) realised that the Safavid ambassador had precedence in the queue of audiences awaiting Murad IV on his return from Baghdad. This was both because the Safavids were Muslims and more especially because Murad was keen to ratify the Safavid peace treaty.⁴

In the face of this eastern emphasis, Western ambassadors at the Porte fought to place their own bias on Ottoman policy. The battle to control the direction of the Porte's European frontier policy was one of the broader purposes of Western negotiations with the Porte. It was essential that ambassadors mastered their role and secured their position within the Ottoman etiquette system since ceremonial represented the key to the Porte: it established the official status of an ambassador, but also provided the only opportunity to proceed further with negotiations. English ambassadors, as late-comers to the Porte, had to surpass their rivals' performance to win, maintain and enhance their place at the Porte.

An exploration of the etiquette involved in the ceremonial of the formal entry, the reception and audience of the English ambassador, the presentation of gifts and the formal departure of the ambassador illustrates the worth and success of these activities within Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic relations. The English adaptation to Ottoman ceremonial etiquette,

1 See Findley: *Ideology* p. 156.

2 Christine Woodhead: "'The Present Terrour of the World'? Contemporary Views of the Ottoman Empire c.1600' *History* 72 (1987) pp. 20-37, pp. 27-28

3 PRO SP97/7 f. 18 Pindar to Dudley Carleton, 30 Aug. 1612

4 PRO SP97/17 f. 231 Crow to Secretary of State, 14 Sept. 1639

established the tone of Anglo-Ottoman relations. It helps to measure English success, firstly in the long term establishment of English prestige at the Porte, and secondly in the short term achievement of political and commercial goals.

The English Experience of Ottoman Court Ceremonial

When the English first made full diplomatic representations at the Porte, they recognised that they had to be successful in the various ceremonies which Ottoman etiquette required new representatives to perform. It was imperative that William Harborne (1583-88) and his retinue conducted themselves impeccably in court ceremonial as this provided entry to the Ottoman system and to the establishment of resident English diplomatic representation. Any fault in their performance could jeopardise the continuation of the mission. If the Porte delayed their reception, it could indicate waning interest in Anglo-Ottoman relations on the part of the sultan or a change in the political climate prejudicial to English attempts to secure diplomatic status at the Porte.¹

The Company had recognised that considerable research had to be conducted before attempting to place a resident ambassador in Constantinople.² This was one purpose of Harborne's first visit to the Porte in 1578.³ In addition to this 'field expedition', it is likely that the organisers of the first English embassy to Constantinople had access to a variety of foreign literature, mainly French and Italian, written by travellers and diplomatic personnel at the Porte, which gave information on the ceremonial practice.⁴ Certainly, the manner of

1 Once the English had established themselves, they regularly reported on other foreign representatives who were not so favourably received by the Porte. The Poles were forced to wait for a long period when arriving to negotiate peace in 1622 and did not help their cause by refusing to present the customary gifts. See below chap. 10 and PRO SP97/8 f. 239 Roe to Nethersole, 6 Sept. 1622; f. 248 Roe to [Nethersole], 19 Sept. 1622; f. 291a Roe to Buckingham, 13 Dec. 1622.

2 On the Company's status as sponsor, see below p. 89 ff.

3 For a detailed study of this visit, which combined preliminary research into diplomatic representation with a feasibility study for English trade in the region, see Harborne.

4 Andrei Pippidi has demonstrated that there was a rising interest in descriptions of the Ottoman Empire in Elizabethan England and that the accessibility of such information was increased by the translation into English of several detailed European works. See Andrei

the arrival of the ship carrying the English ambassador at the Porte on Good Friday 1583 demonstrated that the English were well aware of the need to make an impression on the Porte before they even entered the maze of court ceremonial.

The ambassadorial party had been briefly detained on the outskirts of Constantinople at Yedikule while the French made final unsuccessful attempts to prevent the entry of the English. Once Murad III gave the order for the ship to be escorted into harbour, the Venetian ambassador reported that on the entry of the English ship, 'great noise of artillery was heard, accompanied by a continual music of trumpets and drums'. An anonymous English account of the occasion records that a 34 gun salute was given under the walls of the Palace and a further 24 gun salute on landing.¹

The purpose of this display was three-fold. Firstly, it allowed the English to make an entrance which could not be ignored by officials at the Porte. Moreover, it made a pretence of paying naval respects to the sultan. It also presented the English as a nation of strong fire-power, and therefore a nation suitable to be represented at the Porte. Such power-games were to become common practice for English ambassadors at the Porte and were part of the diplomatic bluffing system which the English adopted to enhance their prestige.

In this case, the grand entry had the desired effect as the Venetian ambassador reported that Murad III had instructed the *Çavuş* and *Kapıcı Başı* to follow the usual custom and greet the English ambassador on landing and escort him to the house which had been hired for him. It is not clear whether the gun salute was an innovation of the English. The Venetian ambassador criticised it as an unchristian display since it was Good Friday and was at pains to play down its effectiveness. These criticisms, from a witness hostile to the English case, suggest that the gun salute was not a regular custom among established foreign residents.

Pippidi: 'Knowledge of and Ideas on the Ottoman Empire in Western Europe and Britain in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries with Special Reference to Thomas Smith and his Friends.' D.Phil Thesis, Oxford, 1985 pp. 138, 151-66. See also Orhan Burian: 'Interest of the English in Turkey as reflected in English Literature of the Renaissance' *Oriens* V (1952) pp. 209-29.

¹ *CSPV* 1581-91 pp. 52-5 no. 130 Giovanni Moresini, Venetian Ambassador in Constantinople to Doge and Senate, 19 April 1583; Anonymous account, possibly written by Edward Barton, then Harborne's secretary, of William Harborne's Embassy in Hakluyt, V p. 251.

There is no evidence for a precedent among contemporary French or Venetian accounts. One explanation for this is that both nations were so well established at the Porte that they no longer commented on conventions of etiquette in their reports. It is just as likely that the English adopted the custom from the Ottoman fleet, which gave a gun salute on departure from the Porte or that they incorporated their domestic custom of greeting new ambassadors with a gun salute on their arrival.¹ Since it was customary for Porte officials to meet new ambassadors when their ship docked, the use of a gun salute allowed the organisation of the Ottoman escort to be timed more accurately.

After Harborne's residence, successive reports of the entry of English ambassadors show that, whatever its origins, the gun salute became a norm of entry. Its size increased so that by Heneage Finch, Earl of Winchilsea's arrival in 1661, it had reached 51 guns and continued to be an important English response to Ottoman etiquette.

One benefit of the gun salute was that it made the sultan personally aware of the English presence. For this reason, it was not restricted to the arrival of the ambassador, but was extended to the arrival of ships bearing official gifts and later to all English ships entering Constantinople to trade. Richard Wrag, who escorted an official gift provided for the second audience of Edward Barton (1588-97), recorded that Murad III was present and had sent thanks for the gun salute given as the English ship arrived.² Indeed, the reaction of the sultan to the salute was one way of testing the political climate. The visibility of the sultan's response was proportional to the reception which an ambassador could expect.

There were also drawbacks to using the gun salute to mark entry to the Porte. By Pindar's residence, the gun salute had been extended to all ships. In May 1618, two ships, an English and a Dutch vessel had 'fired the usual salvo with some pieces of ordnance near the kiosk of the sultan.' This alerted Osman to their arrival and he sent officials to find what cargo

1 See Hakluyt V p. 254 for departure of Ottoman fleet. John Chamberlain reported to Dudley Carleton that 'Yesterday here [London] arrived an ambassador from the new elected emperor of Moscovie. He had a peale of ordinance at his landing at Towre Wharfe...' Chamberlain I no. 183, 27 Oct. 1613.

2 The audience was necessitated by the death of Sultan Murad III in 1595. Hakluyt VI pp. 93-113.

they were carrying. Discovering that they had no real cargo, the captains were imprisoned under suspicion of piracy and a general proclamation was sent to all foreign representatives, stating that, in future, ships which came to Turkey must bring merchandise.¹ The Ottoman authorities were concerned that empty ships could indulge in piracy both in the Eastern region of the Mediterranean and even in the Bosphorus itself. By performing the conventional gun salute informing the Ottomans of their arrival, these ships had unwittingly opened themselves to investigation. The custom of making the sultan aware of English ships had the less welcome side effect of allowing him more personal control over their movements.

By Winchilsea's residence (1660-69), the Porte seems to have taken the stage-managing of the gun salute into its own hands. Rycaut's account of Winchilsea's arrival recorded:

'... being opposite to the point of the Seraglio, a Bostangee, or one belonging to the gardens of the Seraglio, came aboard to acquaint us that the Grand Signor's pleasure was that we should rejoyce with guns (for that was his expression) after which were fired 51 guns...'²

While the English could create a high profile for themselves by a public show of power, the Ottoman system was sophisticated enough to adapt to this convention, and powerful enough to turn it to the Porte's own ends.

The use of a gun salute demonstrates that from their very first official appearance at the Porte, the English made an assertive approach to the court ceremonial in which they had to participate. The response and adaptation of the Porte to the English initiative illustrates the strength of the system the English were entering. Some ambassadors fared better than others in this aspect of their position - a great deal depended on the political climate of the time - but all tried to raise English prestige to gain the best possible advantage.

There were two main reasons for establishing and maintaining prestige at the Porte. The first was the traditional diplomatic procedure of reflecting the dignity and honour of the prince represented at the Porte, through the behaviour of his diplomatic staff.

The second was that possession of a certain level of prestige at the status-regulated

¹ CSPV 1617-19 no. 367 pp. 218-19 Almorò Nani, Venetian Ambassador to Doge and Senate, 24 May 1618.

² Rycaut p. 4.

Porte raised the profile of an ambassador and gave him access to useful channels of information and to the heart of government, which, in this period did not always mean access to the sultan himself. Having a suitable degree of prestige was not a guarantee of successful negotiations – as I shall prove later, a generous purse was equally necessary for routine negotiations – but prestige was the machine through which negotiations could be operated. The aim, then, of successive English ambassadors was to maintain the prestige which allowed both daily routine and special duties to be carried out without interference from and, if possible, with the assistance of the Ottoman authorities.

The first hurdle which an ambassador had to surmount was the ceremonial attached to presenting his credentials. This was a lengthy occasion and took the form of a preliminary audience with the Grand Vizier, a banquet, an audience with the sultan and the presentation of official gifts.¹ The reception and audience was vital to the success of an embassy because it conferred official status upon the ambassador. It represented the formal acceptance of the duty of hospitality and protection by the sultan (expressed in the banquet), and in return, at least in theory, the obedience of the ambassador to the commands of the sultan.²

The official acceptance of an ambassador through this ceremony was considered so important for the status of the ambassador, that it was usual for new ambassadors not to be officially visited by other ambassadors until they had received their first audience with the sultan.³

While the function of the reception and audience was to confer official status on the ambassador, the form of the ceremonial also contributed to the Ottoman goal of impressing visitors with the sultan's power. The sultans had adapted their palace, the Topkapı Saray, to reflect their system of etiquette. The Palace itself stood in a commanding position overlooking

1 See Zarıf Orgun: 'Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Nâme ve Hediye Getiren Elçilere Yapılan Merasim' Türk Tarih Vesikaları I (1941-42) pp. 407-13.

2 This stemmed from the Ottoman view of its relations with western nations as a unilateral grant from the sultan, see below p. 141 ff.

3 CSPV 1581-91 pp. 52-55 no. 130 Giovanni Moresini, Venetian Ambassador to the Doge and Senate, 19 April 1583: '...I begged to be pardoned if I did not visit him [Harborne] in person, as the custom of the Porte was that no Ambassador should receive visits til he had kissed hands with the Sultan.'

the Bosphorus and was detached from the city by strong walls.

The architecture was arranged to express in physical terms the theory of circles of influence. General business was conducted by public servants in the outer courtyard. Within that was an inner courtyard where the sultan's personal staff worked and finally, at the centre of the Topkapı Palace, were the sultan's apartments, reserved solely for the sultan and his attendants. The whole palace was entered through the Bab-i Humayun, the Imperial Gate through which all diplomatic representatives were required to make their ceremonial entrance when granted an audience. The system of courtyards had the dual effect of controlling entry to the Porte and to the sultan, and of emphasising the centrality of the sultan in power and government.

The importance of the audience to an English ambassador is reflected in the detailed eye-witness descriptions which survive for several ambassadors in this period.¹ These all dwell on the differences between Ottoman etiquette and English ceremonial practice. Care has to be taken in using these accounts in this context because each commentator was concerned with emphasising the performance of his own particular ambassador compared to his predecessors and rivals. Nevertheless, it is possible to establish the norms of the ceremonial and the differences from the commentators' own English practices. These variations illustrate the main functions of the Ottoman audience ceremonial.

The three major contrasts which English observers noted were that the ambassador was held between two guards when he was presented to the sultan, that he was forced to bow before the sultan and that the sultan did not talk directly to the ambassador but addressed any comments through the Grand Vizier.² This last contrasted with the private audience given

1 For the anonymous description of Harborne's reception, see Hakluyt, V pp. 252-53, for Barton's second audience, Hakluyt, VI pp. 97-102, and Lansing Collins: 'Barton's Audience in Istanbul' *History Today* 25 (1975) pp. 262-70; Pindar: Purchas, IX pp. 325-27; Bendish: MS. Rawl C 799 f.12, *Newes from Turkey* (London, 1648) pp. 16-18; Winchelsea: Rycaut pp. 7-11.

2 See Robert Withers's description of an ambassadorial audience in Purchas, IX pp. 335-37 and Bargrave's account of Bendish's audience in Bodl. MS. Rawl. C 799.

to visiting ambassadors by the English monarchs.¹ These actions were a symbolic representation of the relationship between the sultan and the ambassador.

From an Ottoman perspective, the holding of the ambassador illustrated his subject status and his inferiority to the sultan was emphasised by the forced kneeling bow. The sultan's refusal to communicate directly with the ambassador should not be seen as a problem presented by a language barrier. It is evident from the eye-witness accounts that a dragoman (interpreter) was present at the audience and several ambassadors, most notably Barton and Glover (1606-1612), spoke some Turkish. In fact, this aspect of the ceremonial emphasizes further the aloofness of the sultan and his all-powerful status. Speaking through the Grand Vizier illustrated the chain of access through which the ambassador was expected to channel petitions.

These then were the symbolic functions of the audience but there were also important practical considerations in the ceremonial. Firstly, it provided the ambassador with an official status and signified the sealing of relations between the English sovereign and the sultan. This was represented by the kissing of the sultan's hand and the presentation of the ambassador's letters of credit. These denoted the handing over of the protection of the English community in the Ottoman Empire to the sultan and the formal acceptance of that responsibility by the sultan. Indeed, only once a diplomatic representative had concluded this ceremonial could he properly be called ambassador and be viewed as such by Porte officials. Peter Wych (1628-38) and Sackville Crow learnt this by bitter experience in 1638 when Crow arrived before Murad IV returned from his Baghdad campaign. In his absence, the sultan would not 'allow anie of his ministers power to licence the departure of ambassadors, nor the privilege to receive anie butt with common civillities.'² Wych had to remain at the Porte because Crow could not act fully as ambassador before he was received officially by Murad.

In Harborne's case, it was particularly important that he successfully establish his

¹ See John Finet: Ceremonies of Charles I: Notebooks 1628-41 (ed.) Albert J. Loomie (New York, 1987) for contemporary royal ceremonial in England.

² PRO SP97/16 f. 188 Crow to Secretary of State, 17 Nov. 1638

credentials at the Porte as the Venetian and French representatives had attempted to prevent English access by arguing that he was a commercial agent and not entitled to be accepted as ambassador. His audience established formal diplomatic relations with the Porte so that, despite continued animosity from the French and Venetians, he was recognised as ambassador by the Ottoman authorities.¹

The ceremonial also established the status of the English ambassador within the hierarchy of foreign ambassadors at the Porte. The Venetian *Bailo* reported:

'The ambassador of the Queen of England, in spite of all the opposition offered to him by the French Ambassador, has this morning kissed the sultan's hands. His suite consisted of over eight *Chiaus*. He has had the usual banquet and the same provision as the French ambassador.'²

The remark is significant because it demonstrates that, at William Harborne's first ambassadorial audience with Murad III, he was given equal status with the French. Previously, only the Venetians and French were given the protected status of being free to trade under their own flag. Any other nation wishing to trade with the Ottoman Empire had to pay for the privilege of travelling under the aegis of these two nations. The Venetian *Bailo*'s comments demonstrate that this changed during Harborne's ambassadorial audience, when the English were admitted to the elite of foreign trading nations with the same privileges as the French. This privilege had to be maintained by successive English ambassadors and was one of the reasons why ambassadors paid so much attention both to their own audience and that of their rivals.

Once the formal status of the English ambassador had been established in the ceremonial, his commission was read aloud in the Porte, outlining the aims of his mission. In contrast to English court ceremonial, there was no immediate discussion of the issues involved but the speech represented a formal petition by a newly accredited ambassador. Paul Rycaut noted that the Ottomans were very careful to keep business out of the ceremonial of

¹ Harborne was not provided with the title 'ambassador' by Elizabeth I in his original letter of credit and this gave his rivals at the Porte an opportunity to play down the diplomatic role of his mission. For the probable reasons behind the lack of a proper title, see below p. 89.

² CSPV 1581-91 pp. 55-56 no. 131. Giovanni Moresini to Doge and Senate, 3 May 1583

Winchilsea's ambassadorial reception. He observed that the Vizier 'further told him that being now come upon a busnesse of ceremony and complement, he could not insist upon much busnesse.'¹ The ceremonial reception of the ambassador's written petition set in motion the necessary bureaucratic mechanisms to initiate negotiations at a practical level.

Of course, the acceptance of the petition did not mean a successful outcome to negotiations as these were conducted at a lower level. The documents could be delayed in the chancery depending on the inclination of officials and the zeal of English ambassadors in following up the promises of the ceremonial. Negotiations also required more material support than ceremonial symbolism to be successful in the short-term.

Nevertheless, the ceremonial presentation of the ambassadorial petition was vital to ensure any attention to English interests. Furthermore, while the sultan remained aloof from the actual negotiations, he represented the final court of appeal in redress of grievances outlined in the petition. He was also the source of authority for any formal agreements resulting from negotiations through his personal signature of ratification, the *hatt-i şerif*. The function of the presentation and acceptance of the ambassadorial petition emphasised the sovereign's will and authority at a ceremonial level and inaugurated negotiations at a practical level.

Finally, the ceremonial audience provided an important opportunity for ambassadors to meet the palace officers they would have to deal with in their detailed negotiations. This was one of the reasons why such audiences were held when the full *Divan* was sitting.² The profile of the Grand Vizier in this ceremonial increased in proportion to his general role during the seventeenth century.

In Paul Pindar's residence, the Grand Vizier conducted preliminary conversation with the ambassador, hosted his banquet and entertained him before handing him over to the *Bostancı Başı*, who acted as master of ceremonies. By 1661 at Winchilsea's audience, the role of the Vizier had expanded further so that a separate preliminary audience was held with him,

¹ Rycaut p. 6.

² See Withers's account in Purchas, IX pp. 335-37.

at which the ambassador presented gifts and received robes in a ceremony mirroring the later audience with the sultan.

From an Ottoman perspective, this element of ceremonial was a chance for palace officials to assess the manipulation potential of an ambassador. From the English point of view, the initial contacts which ambassadors made on this occasion could help them determine potential allies and enemies for their negotiations. As both sides benefitted from the practice, it was accepted by English ambassadors.

In addition to conforming to these Ottoman elements of etiquette in the audience of an ambassador, the English were anxious to strengthen their position by ensuring that there was, as far as possible, a smooth continuity of ambassadors. In the first years of the embassy, the Company secretary supervised English affairs in the interim period before a fully accredited successor, usually the secretary himself, was appointed as ambassador. Harborne was advised to 'return, leaving your secretary in the place according to the custom, whom the merchants are content to maintain' when he retired in 1587.¹ The problem with this practice was that Company secretaries, even with official letters accrediting them agents, had no official diplomatic status at the Porte. This restricted access to key Ottoman officials and made it difficult to negotiate commercial matters and impossible to discuss diplomatic affairs. Although the Porte overlooked Barton's status as agent in 1588, pressure from the French and Venetians forced the Ottoman authorities to demand that Barton present full diplomatic credentials before he could negotiate a renewal of the English trading rights and diplomatic privileges.

To overcome this problem, when Paul Pindar was replaced by John Eyre (1620-22) in 1620, the new ambassador was introduced to the Porte by his predecessor. This emphasised the ambassadorial nature of Eyre's appointment, after several months where the Company had threatened to appoint a commercial agent rather than a full ambassador following a perceived deterioration in trade privileges. Only a flurry of diplomatic activity by the Grand Vizier and

¹ Walsingham to Harborne, 24 Jun. 1587 reproduced in Conyers Read: Mr Secretary Walsingham (Oxford, 1925) p. 332.

the promise of redress of English commercial grievances had made the Company reconsider.¹ The Porte was clearly equally anxious to have the English properly represented and subsequently insisted that each ambassador did not leave the Porte until he had presented his successor. The Company recognised that although it could gain some short-term advantage from holding out on supplying a full ambassador, in the long term neither Company nor Crown could hope to maintain privileged status without the regular induction of full ambassadors.

The presence of Pindar at Eyre's audience demonstrated both the continuity of status and of commission of the English ambassador and was represented by the fact that both men kissed Osman's hand, in Pindar's case signifying his relinquishing of the commission and in Eyre's his formal appointment to the commission. The joint audience also provided an occasion when the sultan could formally grant an ambassador's dismissal by providing him with a travel licence and, often, letters for the English monarch.²

In the case of Roe (1622-28) and his successor, Peter Wych, Roe presented Wych to Murad IV and stayed on for several months in a semi-official capacity, as extraordinary ambassador to see if he could steer negotiations involving the Transylvanian prince, Bethlen Gabor, to a successful conclusion.³ Thomas Bendish (1647-1660) presented his successor Winchilsea at both the Grand Vizier's and the sultan's audience.⁴

This device for stressing continuity appears to have become so firmly established by the mid-seventeenth century that the refusal of an ambassador to promote or attend his successor's audience was tantamount to a refusal to endorse the candidate and could prevent an ambassador from taking office. This problem first came to light when Sackville Crow

1 See CSPV 1617-19 p. 254 no. 432 Almorò Nani, Venetian *Bailo* to Doge and Senate, 7 Jul. 1618; pp. 273-74 no. 461 Ibid to Ibid, 22 Jul. 1618.

2 Bodl. Ash. MSS. 800, Mehmed IV to Charles II indicates that the Sultan considered the main function of this joint audience as an opportunity for granting a travel licence to the retiring ambassador.

3 See below, p. 239.

4 Rycart pp. 6,8.

refused to endorse the candidature of Thomas Bendish in 1647 because he considered that this apparent royal appointment had been forced upon a beleaguered Charles I.

Bendish managed to circumvent this obstacle to his ceremonial because he had royal letters of appointment, the clear backing of a substantial number of the English merchant community in the Ottoman Empire and brought official gifts. His success in securing his own audience without Crow's support, suggests that the Porte had its own criteria for deciding whether an ambassador was a legitimate representative and did not depend solely on the introduction of the retiring ambassador. Bendish himself prevented Richard Lawrence from replacing him as Company agent in 1654 because the latter did not have letters accrediting him with full ambassadorial status or the important official gifts.

Bendish's reasoning was based on an astute assessment of Ottoman conventions although Lawrence suggested that Bendish's motive was personal gain. Retiring ambassadors were present at their successor's audience only to ensure continuity of status and in Lawrence's case this would be unwarranted, as he was clearly commissioned merely as a commercial agent and general chargé d'affaires.¹ There was no guarantee that the Porte would accept him as such, as English experience illustrated. Bendish pointed out that when John Chapman had been sent as a temporary agent to deal with English affairs at the Porte in the period between Eyre's revocation and Roe's arrival, he had not been accepted as a diplomatic representative.² Bendish outlined the Ottoman perception of the situation when voicing his concerns about the situation to Secretary Thurloe:

'For the Turkes to receive an agent from our Nation is contrary to the tone of our Capitulations, which were made at first and renewed from tyme to tyme in the name of the Ambassador, and the Grand Signior's letters are allwaies conformable thereto, running after this manner; Wee have received your Ambassador and accepted his person and your present at his hands. Now whether we shall be able to draw them from theire accustomed wayes (being a Nation much addicted thereto) is not a little questionable.'³

1 Bodl. Rawl. MS. A 261 f. 14 Cromwell to Levant Company, 14 Aug. 1654: 'Mr. Lawrence was authorized to remayne there as agent or Caya [sic: *kahya*?] until some fit person could be sent with the quality of ambassador.'

2 Thurloe, II p. 138 Bendish to Council of State, 4 Mar. 1653/4

3 Bodl. Rawl. MSS. A 12 f. 105 Bendish to Secretary Thurloe, 4 Mar. 1653/4.

For Lawrence to be endorsed by the presence of the retiring ambassador would set a dangerous precedent, which might allow the erosion of English status at the Porte.¹ Bendish also had pressing practical reasons why he did not want Lawrence to succeed him. The letters accompanying Lawrence included the usual pleasantries at a time when Bendish had been agitating for a formal letter of complaint against abuses by Ottoman officials in Aleppo. He feared that he would not be able to press the urgency of the Aleppo case, when the official letters were couched in such friendly terms. His use of the etiquette system to block Lawrence was sufficient to prevent the latter from taking office and emphasises the power of ceremonial in permitting entry to the Ottoman system.

These then were the important elements of an ambassadorial audience: the symbolic representation of the relationship between the sultan and a foreign diplomatic representative; the establishment and maintenance of a relationship between foreign sovereign and sultan; the protection and privilege of a foreign community within the Ottoman Empire, the establishment of the foreign ambassador within the social hierarchy of the Porte and the continuity of status and commission between successive ambassadors. This vital audience was only provided by the Porte if there were two favourable motivations.

The first of these was the political climate and Ottoman preoccupations, especially in foreign policy. This depended to a great extent on which officials were in the ascendant at a particular time. In the seventeenth century, with the frequent deposition of high-ranking public figures, it became increasingly necessary to capitalise rapidly on any favourable circumstances to gain the attention of the sultan. The approach of successive English ambassadors to this challenge will be examined in later chapters dealing with policy development.

The second motivation was a material one. Foreign ambassadors were expected to provide official gifts to demonstrate the value their sovereign placed on an amicable alliance with the Ottoman Empire. This practice was often one of the main reasons why an ambassador was accepted and so the challenge in the first years of the English embassy was to provide

¹ Thurloe, II p. 138.

gifts which would either intrigue or captivate the sultan and thus induce him to grant an audience where he could receive them.

Ottoman Ceremonial Gift Exchange: A Practical and Theoretical Challenge to the English Embassy

Just as the forms of etiquette used at the Porte were descended from Byzantine, Arab and Central Asian roots, so too the practice of gift exchange can be traced back to these societies. By the late sixteenth century, gift exchange between the Porte and foreign ambassadors had been formalised so that an ambassador presenting his gift expected a formal reception and endowment with the rights and privileges of an ambassador in return. This was symbolised by the presentation of a robe (*khil'a*) to the ambassador in an ante-room to the audience chamber immediately before the ambassador was presented to the sultan. This tradition may have had its roots in the Byzantine practice of receiving valuable goods from commercial and diplomatic legations in return for robes of honour to mark their official status. There was also a Mamluk practice of awarding *khil'a al-kudum*, a robe given to a guest from a foreign land.¹

There was, however, another explanation for the presentation of a *khil'a* in Ottoman ceremonial and one which was played down by the foreign legates at the Porte. This was the Perso-Arab tradition of presenting state officials with a robe to indicate their status within the state hierarchy. Robert Withers recognised the ambiguity of the presentation of robes by noting that anyone who kissed the sultan's hands, whether foreigner or Ottoman subject, received such a robe. It seems likely that the presentation of robes to foreign ambassadors and their retinues was, in fact, the presentation of a *khil'at al-niyaba (al istikrar)* or a robe of appointment. This interpretation is further supported by Withers's comment that the robes presented to the English ambassador were 'of divers sorts, of which there is one or two for the Ambassadors owne person of cloth of gold or Bursa, the other [for members of his retinue]

¹ See N.A. Stillman's entry on 'Khil'a' in *EI*².

being of lowe price worth little or nothing.’¹ This reflects the presentation of robes to a Paşa and his household. This explanation conforms with the Ottoman concept of order and emphasises that foreign legates were not dealt with outside the established social order, but were incorporated into it and treated as members of the ruling class.

There were further implications for the position of foreign ambassadors in Ottoman society in the etiquette of gift-giving which were deliberately ignored by the English representatives. If we accept the *khil’at al-niyaba* interpretation, then the official gifts presented to the sultan can be viewed as the response of a subject to honours bestowed upon him, in much the same way as a grateful Paşa would present gifts (*pişkeş*) to the sultan after a promotion.² Indeed, Withers himself admitted this similarity:

’There is not any ambassadour (which is to goe to the king for his audience) or Bashaw (which at his returne from some employment abroad is to kisse his hand) but they present him to the full of what the canon requireth, insomuch that the Grand Signior receveth far more than he giveth.’³

Henry Lello (1597-1606) went even further by conceding that:

’whate we or any other Christians can bringe unto him he doth thinke that we dow it in dutie or in feare of him, or in hoppe of some greate favoure we expekte at his hands.’⁴

For the English, this definition suggested that, at best, the diplomatic representatives were elite subjects of the sultan and, at worst, they carried tribute from the English monarch to the sultan. Indeed, even before the English established their embassy at the Porte, they had been concerned over this aspect of etiquette.⁵

Fortunately, Ottoman ideas about the function of gift giving were ambiguous enough

1 See Purchas, IX pp. 335-37.

2 On the use and abuse of this custom, see Halil İnalcık: ’Tax Collection , Embezzlement and Bribery in Ottoman Finances’ *TSAB* 15 (1991) pp. 332-3

3 See Purchas, IX pp. 335-37.

4 James Theodore Dent (Ed.): *Early Travels in the Levant* (London, 1893) Lello’s speech to Thomas Dallam before the presentation of an English musical organ to Mehmed III, pp. 64-5.

5 See B.L. Lansd. MSS. 112/24 f. 109 Matters to be Considered form the Honour of Your Majestie and of the Realme, (undated) which debated whether Elizabeth should send gifts to the sultan in case they were considered tribute.

for the English to disregard this potentially damaging aspect of the Ottoman perception of international relations. Instead, they emphasised the concept of honoured friendship and placed their own interpretation of satisfied exchange on gift giving. English ambassadors accepted their robes as a convention of 'honour and favour'.¹ The latter was a form of exchange which was current at the English Court at least by the reign of Charles I: it was the practice of the English monarch to exchange gifts with visiting legates when diplomatic business had been concluded satisfactorily.² While this practice did not exactly fit the experience of English ambassadors at the Porte, it could be adapted to give a more palatable explanation to the English authorities as to why so many presents were required at the Porte.

Because the ambassadorial reception was vital to inaugurate an embassy, English ambassadors promoted the idea that the exchange of presents represented official thanks for acceptance and a satisfactory conclusion to the preliminaries of diplomatic relations. A similar policy was attempted in English efforts to establish diplomatic links with the Safavids. When Sir Dodmore Cotton arrived at the Safavid court without a gift, he argued that 'it was the custom of the kings of England and princes of the West first to make leagues, after to send presents.'³ This view could be supported by the fact that, at the Ottoman Porte, presents were required at the accession of each sultan. The English publicised such gifts as insurance of continued diplomatic relations. This reasoning lay behind Edward Barton's bold refusal to present the official gift until an English captive, John Field, had been released.⁴ Likewise, Richard Wrag, the commentator on Barton's audience, observed that when all the preliminary ceremonies and the gift exchange had been concluded and the ambassador brought into the presence of the sultan:

'the ambassador, according as it is the custome when any present is delivered,

1 Rycaut p. 9.

2 John Finet, Charles I's Master of Ceremonies described an incident where the Swedish ambassador refused to accept gifts from the English King because his negotiations had not been successfully concluded. See Finet: Ceremonies p. 37.

3 Clarendon, I pp. 36-45 Relation of Sir D. Cotton's Embassy into Persia

4 See Richard Wrag's account of Barton's audience, Hakluyt, VI pp. 96-98.

made his three demaunds, such as he thought most expedient for her majesties honor and the peaceable traffique of our nation into his dominions...'¹

This states the English perception of gift exchange as an equal exchange between two sovereign powers, the English monarch represented in proxy by an ambassador and the sultan in person, to create an amicable alliance.

Despite this imaginative English reworking of the Ottoman theory of gift-giving, fears that this protocol was akin to giving tribute continued. Paul Pindar's secretary Robert Withers, attempted to resolve the dilemma by suggesting that a two-tier system operated. At the higher level were states whose ambassadors were viewed as allies. These presented their gifts as part of a public acceptance ceremony, providing them as a convention of gratitude to seal the relationship. Vassal states and others who owed any kind of tribute formed a lower group who gave their gifts in private.² Withers's analysis holds some weight as true tributary states presented tribute annually, thus requiring a less ostentatious ceremony than resident ambassadors who only presented gifts on their arrival and at the accession of the sultan.

Nevertheless, even at the beginning of Winchilsea's residence in 1661, the English were still experiencing difficulty in promoting the idea of an equal alliance to the Porte officials. When Bendish suggested to the Grand Vizier that Charles II had honoured Mehmed IV by accrediting the ambassador to the Porte first and by selecting such a high-ranking English nobleman as Winchilsea, the Vizier replied that such an act was only to be expected since the sultan was the principal sovereign of the world.³ Throughout this period, English diplomatic representatives were forced to operate a gift-giving convention which, though worrying in its implications, was vital to maintain them in the Porte system.

In practical terms, too, the etiquette of gift-giving was a problem for the English. Firstly, it was difficult to make the Company authorities understand the importance of regular gifts. Secondly, there was the dilemma of what was suitable to provide and finally, there was

¹ Hakluyt, VI p. 101.

² See Purchas, IX pp. 335-37.

³ Rycaut p. 6.

the organisation involved in making the presentation of the gifts as spectacular and, more importantly, as memorable as possible. This last was essential because as well as giving an ambassador access to the Porte system, the practical function of gift-giving was to raise the profile of the English, provide them with bargaining power for the detailed stage of negotiations and give them some long-term diplomatic credit at the Porte. This diplomatic credit ensured that, even during the frequent flux of officers and sultans from 1617-23, the English were well-regarded enough to ride out the fluctuations with little change in status.

The practical importance of the protocol of gift-giving is demonstrated by the fact that the English had evidently assessed it before their formal arrival at the Porte. Harborne was well equipped with gifts of an acceptable sort: material and plate in 1578 and a clock, material and dogs in 1583, which the Venetian *Bailo* reported were favourably received.¹ These gifts suggest three avenues which could gain favour with the sultan. The cloth and plate demonstrated the commercial ability and integrity of the English, while the clock was indicative of the value which the English placed upon an alliance with the Porte. The dogs appealed directly to Murad III and his known love of hunting. That Harborne was successful in his embassy was in part due to the political climate of the time, but the abundance of the gifts which accompanied him clearly smoothed his path. The value of these early gifts confirms that the Company were prepared to spend whatever was necessary to establish an English presence at the Porte.

The draw-back of the Ottoman system was that one sustained burst of generosity was not sufficient to maintain prestige. The system continually demanded official presents and having provided such valuable examples at the beginning, there was pressure on the English to sustain this degree of largesse. The Porte was encouraged in this by the French and Venetian resident diplomatic representatives who continued their attempts to oust the English from the Porte throughout Harborne's residence.

This pressure presented a major problem to Harborne's successor, Edward Barton. By

¹ See Bodl. Tanner MSS. 77 f. 53 and CSPV 1581-91 p. 68 no. 164 Vote in Venetian Senate, 13 Sept. 1583

the time of his residence, the Company had tired of finding and funding suitable presents to send to the Porte. Barton's constant entreaties to the Company and the Crown indicate his concern over their growing neglect of the importance of gift-giving in the Ottoman system.

It was very difficult for the English authorities, who operated under a system different from that of the Porte, to understand the urgency of Barton's demands. The ambiguity of control of the English ambassador at the Porte meant that the English Crown delegated all financial responsibility to the Company. When, as in Barton's case, a substantial present had been provided at his first audience and during the negotiations for renewing England's capitulations, the Company became unhappy with footing the whole bill for official presents with no help from the Crown. The problem was exacerbated with the death of a sultan, as with that of Murad III in 1595, and the merchants complained in vain to Robert Cecil about the burden of expense laid on them by such presents.¹ Indeed, the conflict between what an ambassador regarded as essential expenses to cope with the Ottoman system and what the Company considered unreasonable demands, was a constant theme in the broader relationship between the English Crown, the Company and the embassy at the Porte.

In the matter of gift-giving, the Company suddenly recognised that it could not avoid compliance with the convention when the death of Edward Barton in 1597 placed the position of the English at the Porte in jeopardy. The problem was that the English were already overdue with their accession present for Mehmed III who had been sultan since 1595. The Company was frustrated that the benefits of the gift sent for Barton's second audience with Murad III had proved short-lived because of the death of the sultan not long after its delivery. The Company was disinclined to fund another gift for the new sultan but this attitude was potentially damaging to the status of the English, since the main purpose of accession gifts was to renew an ambassador's commission under a new sultan. In Ottoman eyes, Barton could have been considered of mere agent status without the presentation of a gift and the accompanying audience. Barton had only managed to stave off demands for the English present and maintain

¹ HMC Salisbury, VI p. 385 Company of Turkey Merchants to Robert Cecil, 13 Sept. 1596.

his ambassadorial status through his own personal standing with the sultan. With Barton's death, however, a present was required on two counts; for Mehmed's accession and, more importantly for the English, to ensure that the new English ambassador was installed with full status.

This desperate situation called for extraordinary measures and the Company worked hard to undo the damage its negligence had caused. It is possible that the situation was exaggerated by the new English ambassador, Henry Lello, who was inclined to be pessimistic about English prospects in the Levant. In fact, the English were fortunate that the Porte was anxious to maintain the Anglo-Ottoman alliance as a check against the Spanish King. Nevertheless, the French at the Porte, under the competent direction of the ambassador, de Brèves, were attempting to erode the status of the English and marginalise English interests. The fear that the English might be ousted from the Porte was the reason for the opulent present which eventually arrived in 1599.

The story of Thomas Dallam's musical organ has already been narrated and it is not my purpose to repeat the details here.¹ The form of its presentation followed the traditional pattern but its significance has been neglected. The incident is important because it clearly demonstrates the function that official gift-giving played in winning an ambassador an audience with the sultan and access to the Ottoman system of government. Only once he had presented the overdue gift was Henry Lello granted an audience with Mehmed III. While the Porte was prepared to accept a delay in gifts, it was not prepared to overlook them completely even in the case of England, which was a potentially useful ally at the time. Furthermore, if Lello's boast that Mehmed spoke to him directly can be believed, although the gift had little value in routine negotiations, it did win the English renewed diplomatic credit which had a positive long-term effect on their status.

The episode also shows that the English were still testing how freely they could operate

1 Thomas Dallam's own travel diary has been edited by Bent: Early Voyages. There are detailed accounts of the events leading up to and including the presentation of the organ in Stanley Mayes: An Organ for the Sultan (London, 1956), which is summarised in Turkish translation in Hayat Tarih Mecmuası I.5 (1969) no. 53 pp. 29-33 and I.6 (1969) no. 54 pp. 72-76. See also Lansing Collins: 'The Sultan's Clock Organ' History Today 26 (1976) pp. 608-15.

in the Ottoman system. The 1599 present marked something of a turning-point in the English approach to the convention of gift-giving. Prior to that point, their presents, late though they might be, were valuable and abundant. They were motivated by commercial desires to safeguard trade and by political hopes of using the Porte against the Spanish.¹ Even before the presentation of Dallam's organ, the Venetian *Bailo* described the English as 'very liberal' in their gifts.² From the beginning of the seventeenth century, the English were more assured of their position and less inclined to pursue an aggressive policy against Spain. Gifts became more conventional, consisting generally of cloth and plate but were presented on time to avoid antagonising the Porte.

The English had recognised that while the convention of official gifts was essential to gain access to the Porte and build up a national reputation there, official gifts were of little use in assisting routine negotiations. To compensate for the decline in the originality of the gifts, ambassadors invested more energy in organising spectacular presentations. At the presentation of Winchilsea's official gifts, Paul Rycaut noted that 'Every one of which vests was held by a several person so that fifty men were ranked in order for the better appearance.' Nevertheless, there was still a concern that the present be considered valuable enough. Rycaut also commented that four English mastiff dogs were added to the robes to make the present more worthwhile.³

Such a display was evidently sufficient in Ottoman eyes to allow Winchilsea to be installed as ambassador. Writing to Charles II, the Grand Vizier emphasised the role of the gift in this procedure. He stated that 'after having prostrated himself in the presence of our emperour and also having delivered the present sent by your Majestie, he was received, accepted and established in the office of Ambassadour.'⁴ The Company was prepared to

1 See Mayes: *Organ* pp. 147-50.

2 See *Ibid* p. 164.

3 Rycaut p. 9.

4 Bodl. Ash. MSS. 800 f. 207 Translate of letter sent from the Greate Vizier to his Majestie Charles the Second, king of England.

accept any convention necessary to maintain the status of the English ambassador, but was not prepared to make a substantial investment in official gifts when success could be achieved by other means.

As sultans involved themselves less directly in the business of the Porte in the early seventeenth century, the Company was more successful in securing its interests through methods which widened the etiquette system to other channels of power and even went beyond the official etiquette system of the Porte.

On the Margins of Etiquette: English Gifts to the Sultana

In the early years of their embassy, in addition to the resident ambassador's usual expenditure on etiquette, the English used another method to make progress with their negotiations. They spread their official largesse to the woman they regarded as the sultana.¹ This was an extremely prudent move as Safiye, the wife of Murad III (1574-95) and the mother of Mehmed III (1595-1603) was a powerful force in the palace. While Safiye was of Venetian origin and helped Venice to maintain the balance of power in the Mediterranean, she recognised that the English, with their strong anti-Habsburg orientation, could supply the weaponry the Ottomans needed to maintain their territorial patrimony against the Spanish in the Mediterranean and the Habsburg forces along the north-west border.² She was capable of redirecting Ottoman policy against the Habsburgs and of speeding up sluggish bureaucracy to deal with English interests.

The English exploited the unusual situation of having a woman on the throne in England to cultivate a formal correspondence and exchange of gifts between the two 'first ladies'. The correspondence between Elizabeth and Safiye was organised by the Company and even the gifts sent to Safiye, like those provided for the sultan, were supplied by the

¹ This was a wholly European perception, the Ottomans had no concept of 'sultana' in the sense of 'queen', even though the sultan's mother (*Valide Sultan*) was recognised as an important influence in the palace.

² CSPV 1592-1603 p. 196. no. 427 Marco Venier, Venetian Ambassador in Constantinople to Doge and Senate, 26 Apr. 1596 notes that the English were importing swords to the Porte.

Company.¹ It provided useful support to English interests, and was one reason for English success in circumventing French opposition to the admission of the English to the Porte. This exchange, however, did not work in the English favour alone.

Safiye was sufficiently politically astute to recognise the Ottoman need for secure diplomatic links with England to ensure a continuation of commodity supplies to Constantinople. However, her close family ties with Venice meant that she was quick to warn the Venetians when they were suspected of plotting with the Spanish against the Anglo-Ottoman alliance. Indeed, Safiye's attempts to keep both Venice and England as allies reflects the importance of their relations with the Porte. Venice held the balance of power in the Mediterranean but England could keep the Ottoman Empire supplied with weapons.

Safiye communicated with both the Venetians and the English, using her Jewish *Kira*, who could move freely between the Topkapi Saray and ambassadorial residences, accepting presents and letters, and transmitting messages.² By promising support to both Venetians and English, Safiye kept herself informed of their intentions and managed to steer a cautious path between antagonising the English and driving the Ottomans to war on the Mediterranean front.

The success of extending official etiquette to meet the opportunity of an English female monarch was limited. Safiye would act for English interests but only as far as they coincided with her own. Furthermore, the confines of the palace harem restricted her perception of circumstances. To engineer real changes in policy, the English had to seek the palace officials responsible for policy execution.

On the Margins of Etiquette: English Gifts to the Grand Vizier

The Grand Vizier was the official with most influence and access to the sultan. William

1 Susan Anne Skilliter: 'Three Letters from the Ottoman "Sultana" Safiye to Queen Elizabeth I' in Documents from Islamic Chanceries (Ed.) S.M. Stern (Oxford, 1965) pp. 119-57

2 CSPV 1581-91 p. 357-9 no. 665 Giovanni Morosini, Venetian Ambassador in Constantinople to Doge and Senate, 18 May 1588; CSPV 1592-1603 p. 196. no. 427 Marco Venier, Venetian Ambassador in Constantinople to Doge and Senate, 26 Apr. 1596

Harborne had recognised the importance of the Grand Vizier and the Company had provided substantial gifts of cloth to maintain the support of Mehmed Sokollu Paşa and his successor, Ahmed Paşa in the first vital negotiations for an Anglo-Ottoman agreement.¹ This established the practice of giving gifts to the Grand Vizier to speed up the process of gaining an audience and steering through the renewal of capitulations.

As the Grand Vizier grew more powerful during the seventeenth century, so ambassadorial gifts to him became more frequent and substantial and the ceremonial attached to presenting gifts grew more imperial. The English expected some returns for recognising the Grand Vizier's expanding role in the etiquette system and increasingly gifts to the Vizier were used as bargaining chips. In 1622, Thomas Roe refused to present an official gift to the Grand Vizier until he could be sure that the current incumbent would retain his position in the aftermath of the deposition of Osman II. Roe bluntly told the Grand Vizier that 'he would give no present untill he sawe him further settled or some occasion happen that should require his help.'² These became the criteria for official ambassadorial generosity towards the Grand Vizier. Viziers had to be secure in their positions and able to further English aims either in arranging audiences or smoothing a path through negotiations.

Likewise, Thomas Bendish placed limits on the largesse of the English towards the Grand Vizier. On his arrival at the Porte in 1647, he was faced with an intransigent predecessor, Sackville Crow. Bendish enlisted the help of the Grand Vizier by giving him his official gift to prove his ambassadorial status. In return, Bendish expected to be granted his audience with Mehmed IV. He claimed that 'I am the first ambassadour from England that ever presented letters from the King, and a presente to a vizeere, that were returned with such dishonour as myselfe from you.' Instead, the Grand Vizier demanded more gifts. Bendish strongly resisted this, saying:

It was never known that a true ambassador made contract for other gifts to purchase his reception. I may not, nay dare not transgress the accustomed rules

¹ For these gifts and the agreement, see Horniker: 'Anglo-Turkish Relations' pp. 296-97, 300-301.

² PRO SP105/102 f. 40 Company Court of Constantinople, 17 Aug. 1622.

nor points of honour, if I should, yourselfe might justly condemne for a deceiver.¹

In fact, Bendish did have to use substantial bribes to oust the French-aided Crow, but his protestations suggest that ambassadors distinguished between official gifts given within the frame-work of the etiquette system to achieve the specific diplomatic aims of entry to the Porte and the securing of a preferential treaty and general bribes which were designed to facilitate routine negotiations on a day-to-day basis.

Other high-ranking officials were also given regular semi-official gifts, usually as a result of their access to the sultan or because they could be relied on to act for English interests. Harborne compiled a list of gifts to be given to various ranks of officials which provide guidelines for his successors.² By the early seventeenth century, it appears that they were given at particular seasons. In 1623, Roe consulted the English community at Constantinople about the late presentation of the usual end of year gift of five robes to the *Kapudan Paşa*. He was mandated to buy a gift worth 20–30 dollars.³ The *Kapudan Paşa* had been the prime ally of the English in the Algiers piracy negotiations of that year.

Although the list of ranks eligible and the formal seasons for presentation place these

1 Thomas Bendish: Newes from Turkie (London, 1648) p. 15

2 Bodl. MS. Tanner 77 f. 53

3 PRO SP105/102 ff. 133–4 Company Court at Constantinople, 23 Dec. 1623. The dollars referred to here are probably Dutch lion-dollars/leventhaler (*esedi/arслан guruş*), so called because they had a picture of a lion on one side. The use of this foreign silver currency highlights the fact that during the seventeenth century, the Ottoman *akçe* was so debased and devalued that it was not used for large payments. Instead, several foreign currencies, most notably the Spanish *real* and the Dutch lion-dollar were used for major transactions. These were freely imported into the Ottoman Empire and stamped at the Imperial mint in Istanbul to prevent counterfeiting and clipping. It is difficult to establish exchange rates for this period as they fluctuated dramatically. The English capitulations fixed rates at 1 *guruş*: 80 *akçes* while İnalcık suggests a rate of 1 *guruş*: 160 *akçes* in 1601. Certainly by 1624, although the official rate was still 80 *akçes*, the English were trading at a rate of 1:240–280 *akçes*. Wood suggests a rate of 1 Spanish Dollar: 4 English shillings 9 pence in 1660. See A.C. Wood: 'The English Embassy at Constantinople, 1660–1762' *EHR* 157 (1925) pp. 533–61; Halil İnalcık: *Dar al-Darb* (the Mint) *EI*² p. 119; H.A.R. Gibb & Harold Bowen: Islamic Society and the West 2 Vol. (Oxford, 1957) I pt. 2 pp. 49–51, 53; Ronald Jennings: 'Loans and Credit in early Seventeenth Century Ottoman Judicial Records' *JESHO* 16 (1973) pp. 168–216; Suraiya Faroqhi: Men of Modest Substance (Cambridge, 1987) pp. 116–8; Bruce Masters: Origins of Western Dominance in the Middle East (New York, 1988) p. 149, 152; Michael Strachan: Sir Thomas Roe, A Life 1581–1644 (Gloucester, 1989) p. 165; Consul pp. 179–85.

on the margins of official gifts, the line becomes blurred between official gifts and bribes. While the Grand Vizier was clearly viewed as providing a route to the sultan, other officials were approached for more practical purposes and often received bribes rather than formal gifts. These were given without ceremonial and lay well outside the official etiquette system. Such unofficial gifts became more popular with the English in the Ottoman Empire during the seventeenth century because they seemed more 'cost-effective' for short term negotiations.

Outside the System: Achieving Short Term Goals

The use of bribes, in addition to official gifts, to achieve policy aims, was one way that ambassadors could justify the expenses incurred to the authorities in England. In general, returns were more tangible and rapid using this method. The success of this joint approach of official gifts and unofficial bribes is indicated by the fact that, despite a rhetoric of complaint visible in frequent petitions to the Council of State, the Company continued to pay for presents as necessary.

Although it worked well, the policy was not without problems. When the palace system became subject to frequent changes in personnel during the early 1620s and again in the 1640s, bribes were needed more frequently but often had little result. This increasing demand for pecuniary rewards for efficient action may partly explain John Eyre's bitter claims that he had been misinformed about the costs involved in his ambassadorial duties. This lack of concrete results explains Thomas Roe's scepticism of the overall achievements of bribery. In July 1625, when the anti-Habsburg ambassadors at the Porte were trying to promote the Transylvanian prince Bethlen Gabor and exclude the Spanish agent from the Porte through bribery, Roe commented:

'I have always beene of the opinion that such small summes are cast away and that in the balance of greate affayres of peace and warr, they are not the weight of a feather.'¹

Roe's attitude mirrored the experience of the English at the Porte throughout this period. While bribes could mobilise rapid and effective action for particular cases, they had little

¹ PRO SP97/11 f. 47 Roe to Haga, 26 Jul. 1625.

long-term effect. Any long-term gains of status or preference had to be sealed by the sultan through the slower processes of court ceremonial. Thus, while bribes were an essential day-to-day aspect of the commercial business of the embassy, official and semi-official gifts were more profitable for broader diplomatic goals because high-ranking officials changed so rapidly.

This picture of the ceremonial and gift giving as it involved the English at the Porte places the English ambassadors and their staff within the environment in which they had to operate both on a high-political basis and on a daily level and outlines their interaction with the Porte officials. However, there was another important aspect to Court ceremonial at the Porte and this was the matter of English and French precedence.

The Question of Ambassadorial Precedence in Ceremonial at the Porte

Although the English established themselves at the Porte much later than the French, they never accepted the French status as superior to theirs. Paul Pindar outlined the reasons for this shortly after his arrival at the Porte in 1612, when he stayed away from the ceremonial procession of foreign ambassadors who greeted the Habsburg ambassador 'to avoid occasion of quarrell about procedure'. He suggested that there was no real basis for French precedence at the Porte; that in cases like marriages and funerals where precedence was given, this was more a matter of special French interest 'either in the place, the parties or the actions' and not an inherent French precedence.¹ While it is possible that Pindar's claims were to disguise the political grounds for his reluctance to greet the Habsburg ambassador, the struggle between the French and the English to gain pre-eminence at the Porte was taken seriously by successive ambassadors.

It is somewhat incongruous to imagine ambassadors from two major states arguing over who passed first in the ceremonies at the Porte, but there was a genuine motive behind the wrangling. The pre-eminent ambassador held the privilege of greater access to the Porte. He

¹ PRO SP97/7 ff. 18-21 Pindar to Dudley Carleton, 30 Aug. 1612.

was able to gain more frequent audiences with the Grand Vizier and held the latter's attention more easily, being seated next to him at banquets.

For this reason, the issue of precedence continued to be a thorn in the flesh of Anglo-French relations at the Porte throughout this period. Most ambassadors tackled the problem using avoidance tactics similar to those adopted by Pindar on the arrival of the Habsburg ambassador. In March 1622/3, Roe complained about this policy:

'The French and I cannot meet in the fields or in the streets, except I should make myself a prisoner, which I will not doe for a French army, nor yield him any title, except he winne it: if wee meete, some inconvenience will happen, which I cannot avoyd, if hee seeke it. If wee continue thus, though wee never meete, yett all our affaires will suffer for it.'¹

Roe had good reason to complain. He had already had to sidestep the issue of precedence in the signing of a petition against the Paşa of Cairo, first by suggesting it was not England's concern 'having none of our nation nor commerce at Cairo' and then by proposing individual petitions. The French ambassador had not been prepared to concede either point and the joint action broke down. Roe later achieved a minor concession by making all ambassadors sign in a line across the page, rather than underneath one another. He himself signed in the centre so that the French could not claim precedence by signing on the opposite side.²

Faced with the intransigence of the French on one hand and the resolution of the English crown 'to yeild it [precedence] no more', Roe advocated a policy which emphasised the community of interests between Western ambassadors.³ It was demonstrated by concerted action and played down the hierarchy of ambassadors. In fact, as shall be seen later, such a policy proved virtually impossible to put into action and so the precedence problem continued.

Weak ambassadors, like John Eyre, were easy prey to French attempts to establish precedence and caused problems for their successors by granting unwarranted precedence to the French. Most preferred to avoid the issue where possible and Thomas Bendish, a

1 Negs. pp. 113-14 Roe to Calvert, 14/24 Dec. 1622.

2 Negs. pp. 269-71 Roe to Calvert, 20/30 Aug. 1624. Ottoman was written in Arabic script and signed from right to left, beginning on the right, while western signatures began on the left.

3 Negs. pp. 60-61 Calvert to Roe, 24 Jun. 1622.

particularly able ambassador, was even able to turn the issue to his advantage.

In December 1651, the Grand Vizier, Gürcü-Mehmed Paşa, made attempts to force the French, Dutch and English ambassadors to sign a statement swearing that they and their nations would not participate in the Venetian navy.¹ Bendish gained himself extra time and the redress of several minor grievances by walking out of the first meeting on the grounds that the Grand Vizier had granted the French ambassador precedence over Bendish. This gave him an advantage because the Grand Vizier was compelled to redress the injury by entertaining him alone. Although Bendish was still forced to sign the statement, he achieved some minor short-term aims through the precedence issue.²

English ambassadors at the Porte had to be skilled in meeting all the official requirements, recognising how to use the system to their best advantage, preventing others from diminishing their position and knowing when to use the system and when to step outside it to achieve their policy aims. The Ottoman etiquette system was indeed the key to unlock the gates of the Porte but entry did not guarantee success. It was up to the ambassador and the strength of his ambassadorial staff to ensure that a glittering entry did not turn into the dust of a failed mission.

¹ See also below p. 219 ff.

² PRO SP97/17 f. 70 Bendish to Council of State, 22 Dec. 1651

CHAPTER II. ENGLAND'S RELATIONS WITH THE OTTOMAN PORTE - FITTING AN APPARENT ANOMALY INTO THE ENGLISH COURT SYSTEM

Having established the embassy in Constantinople in its operational milieu, it is equally important to assess how the English authorities fitted the Ottoman method of diplomacy into their own very different system and how they coped with the occasional *ad hoc* visits of Turks with pretensions of diplomatic status, which lay at odds with Ottoman assertions of non-reciprocity. Furthermore, it is essential to understand how the English ambassadors at the Porte were perceived by their own authorities as this had a significant effect on their working relationship.

To establish a norm for Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic relations within the English system, the conduct and procedure for other foreign diplomats in England, especially those from non-Christian and Eastern states have to be examined. The status and duties of English ambassadors to the Porte must be viewed in the context of those to other western states.

A comparison of English and Ottoman ceremonial suggests that while both appeared formal, the former was a more flexible system and one which allowed reasonable access to the monarch, while the latter relied heavily on precedent and strict control of access to the sultan.

There is a fairly continuous narrative of English royal ceremonial from 1628-40, through the note books of Charles I's Master of Ceremonies, John Finet.¹ This provides an accurate first-hand picture of the formal greeting, entertainment and audience of foreign diplomats as well as giving details of gift exchange practice at the English Court. In addition, there are several brief accounts of diplomatic visits, contained in the State Papers. All these help to demonstrate the differences of approach and interpretation of ceremony in the English system from that at the Porte.

English Court Ceremonial for Visiting Diplomats

The form of English etiquette in this period evolved from that used by Elizabeth and, like that of the Porte, began with the arrival of the ambassador to England. The formal

¹ Finet: Ceremonies pp. 45-297

greeting of an ambassador was very similar to that of the Porte. The master of ceremonies was present at the Port of London to provide a welcome in the King's name to arriving diplomats. At this stage, before the ambassador was formally accepted, his rank and credentials were established. This was important because, unlike the Porte, where all ambassadors received a standard escort, the English system was hierarchical and the appropriate escort had to be discussed by the master of ceremonies and the Chamberlain. Once this was settled, the escort, usually a peer for visiting ambassadors, brought the diplomat to London and established him in his appointed lodging where he underwent a third official arrival ceremony.

The audience with the monarch was conducted with similar stage-management from the Palace. In contrast to the Ottoman system, where the onus was on an ambassador to supply his retinue and the horses for his ceremonial entry to the Porte, in England, the King's coach was commissioned to take ambassadors to the palace, usually Whitehall, where he was to be received. He was escorted by a peer and greeted with a fanfare on arrival.¹ The function of English royal ceremonial was similar to that of the Porte; to emphasise the magnificence of the monarch. The approach was very different: rather than emphasising the seclusion of the monarch, the English emphasised his largesse, suggesting, through the minute detail and organisation of the ceremonial, that the king controlled all levels of power.

The audience of an ambassador at the English Court presents the greatest contrast to the ceremony of the Porte. Ambassadors waited with their appointed escort in a Chamber of Repose before a public audience where speeches were given by both king and ambassador. After this, the ambassador returned to the Chamber of Repose to prepare for a private interview with the king in the withdrawing chamber; it was here that diplomatic letters were presented and discussion of the ambassador's commission took place.

The two audiences were designed to meet different functions. The public audience served the same purpose as that of the sultan in formally accepting the ambassador and

¹ Evliya Celebi noted that at the Porte, it was the sultan's custom to place his imperial band to play under the windows of a foreign embassy on the day of its ambassador's audience. A band also played at Vizier's houses on their appointment. See Alexander Pallis: In the Days of the Janissaries (London, 1951) p. 181

establishing him with an official status in English society. The second audience, which by its intimate nature emphasises the accessibility of the English king, resembles the audience conducted with the Grand Vizier where, on the one hand, the finer points of the commission were presented and on the other, the concerns of the English king were raised. Once again, the emphasis was laid on the involvement of the king at all levels. Such an interpretation of power differed from that at the Porte, where the sultan had to be detached from the details of negotiation to maintain his all-powerful status.

The English Court did not provide a banquet as a matter of course for its ambassadorial guests, as audiences were held at various times of the day and were regarded as a formality, not an essential test of an ambassador's skill. Instead, the Crown provided Bouge of Court, which consisted of the provision of bread, ale, firewood and candles in proportion to the status of the embassy. This took the same role as the banquet and provisioning of ambassadors by the Ottoman Porte, but was more restricted. By Charles I's reign, this bouge or 'diet' was limited to the period between arrival and audience, although residential ambassadors had an extra allowance of tax-free wine and a gift of venison from the royal forests.

The importance of the banquet in the Ottoman Porte was in part a reflection of the Islamic emphasis on hospitality, but also symbolized the Ottoman perception that foreign ambassadors were state servants and, like the janissaries and palace officials, had to be provided for as part of the Imperial household. There was no such consideration in the English Court system which regarded ambassadors purely as negotiating partners. Instead, expenditure was concentrated on rewarding satisfactory negotiations.

Satisfaction was displayed in the form of departure gifts, which by this period had assumed a standardized form. An ambassador of a Monarch received two thousand ounces of silver plate valued at eight hundred pounds sterling, an ambassador of a lesser state received twelve hundred ounces valued at four hundred and twenty pounds, while an agent received a gold chain and a medal of two hundred and ten pounds in value. Temporary diplomats received a variety of rings, tapestries and jewels. From these gifts, it is evident that the accent

of etiquette was on conducting an embassy as rapidly and successfully as possible. This was in keeping with the limited budget of the English court and in the style of English diplomacy in the West. Once again, it is very different to the Ottoman stress on lengthy negotiations and embassies. The Ottoman Empire, to a large extent, depended on foreign embassies to publicise its grandeur and power to Western sovereigns. Western diplomats were geared towards much shorter term negotiations and so the ceremonial in which they operated reflected the nature of these goals and was much more flexible than the set forms so necessary to the Ottoman etiquette system.

The normal form of etiquette also had to take into consideration extra-ordinary delegations which were not budgeted for in general crown expenditure. It was into this category that the infrequent Ottoman visitors to the Porte were to fall, but the English system also had experience of such *ad hoc* visits through its dealings with Persia, Russia and the Barbary States. The English etiquette system accommodated these occasional visitors by passing on the expenditure of such delegations to trading companies whose interests were most closely connected with them. Despite complaints about the burden of this expenditure from merchants, this policy was not considered inappropriate by either Companies or the Crown, but was rather an established and accepted practice. In 1628, the Crown prevailed against the Muscovy merchants who argued that the Crown should pay for an expected delegation, since it came on crown and not on commercial business. The Crown won by insisting that it was 'the old way' to put the charge on the Company.¹ More importantly, although the body financing such a delegation's hospitality was not the Crown, the reception and audience of the embassy proceeded according to the usual form with the Crown as the visible source of authority. This suggests that the Crown considered such delegations within the official ceremonial even though it pleaded insufficient funds to finance them.

This argument is further strengthened by the case of a delegation from the Barbary Coast in October 1637, which came to discuss English relations with the region. At first, it was assumed that the Barbary Merchants would undertake the hospitality expenses, but when the

¹ Finet: Ceremonies p. 48

Crown realised that the relevant merchants were few and not organised into a formal company, it undertook to finance the delegation according to the usual regulations governing more regular extra-ordinary embassies.¹

Ottoman Delegations to the English Court

Into this pattern, it is easier to fit the few extra-ordinary Ottoman diplomatic visits which occurred in James I's and Charles I's reigns. The first visit was that of a Turk called Mustafa who had left Constantinople in 1605 and arrived in England in July 1607, after a visit to the French Court. The cost of his visit, like that of other occasional delegations was defrayed by merchants, in this case the Levant Company. Ostensibly, his visit was to register Ahmed I's concern about the increase of English piracy in the Mediterranean, but it is likely that he was the first Ottoman intelligence agent sent to gather information about English policy in general.

Mustafa announced himself as ambassador from Ahmed I, although his Turkish title, *çavuş*, signified only an imperial messenger. The Master of Ceremonies had problems deciding on the status of Mustafa, because it was the first time an Ottoman official had ever visited the English court. Henry Lello (1597-1606), then English ambassador at the Porte had contributed to the confusion by complaining that the Grand Vizier was dishonouring James I to send such a 'petty fellow' with an imperial commission.²

In Ottoman terms, however, *çavuşlar* often played a diplomatic role. In 1622, Thomas Roe managed to dissuade the Grand Vizier from sending a *çavuş* around Europe to announce the accession of Mustafa. His comments that such visits placed a heavy burden on receiving states, suggest that the use of *çavuşlar* as diplomatic envoys was an established Ottoman policy.³ This is reinforced by the *çavuş* who visited Sackville Crow (1639-47) in 1647 to persuade him to give up his commission to Thomas Bendish (1647-60). He was described as

1 Ibid pp. 230-1

2. PRO SP97/5 f. 38 Thomas Sherley to Salisbury, 8 Nov. 1605

3. B.L. Harl. MS. 1580 f. 380 Roe to Duke of Buckingham, 31 May 1622.

'a man of great qualitie and been foure times Ambassadour with foreign Princes.'¹ Likewise, when Bendish and Crow continued to dispute their right to the Commission, the Vizier threatened to send a *çavuş* to England to receive a direct answer from the English authorities.²

This use of 'messengers' by the sultan reflects the Ottoman theory that all sovereigns were subordinate to the sultan, so that rather than send a proxy in the form of an ambassador, he was entitled to send a messenger. Indeed, the dispatching of *çavuşlar* to states resident at the Porte on the accession of a new sultan resembles the sending of instructions to tributary states to prepare the necessary presents and courtesies.

Whatever Mustafa's real diplomatic status, relations with the Porte were important enough for James I's ministers to hesitate about taking any action which might jeopardise the position of the English community in the Ottoman Empire. Mustafa was treated as an official diplomat although his audience was a low-key affair at Windsor. Unlike the sultan, who always held ambassadorial audiences in the Topkapi Saray except on rare occasions when he was at his Summer Palace at Adrianople (Edirne), English monarchs had several grades of palace at their disposal. The use of Windsor avoided the public pomp and ceremony of Whitehall and possible repercussions of agents from minor states demanding similar treatment, but afforded the Ottoman diplomat sufficient status to combat any complaints about his treatment in England.

This compromise was successful. Thomas Glover (1606-1612), who had taken over from Lello as English ambassador at the Porte on Mustafa's return, commented on the favourable impression of the English Court and its hospitality which Mustafa's account of his stay had created at the Ottoman Porte.³ Mustafa's report showed that the primary functions of court ceremonial, those of displaying the Crown's hospitality and generosity as a demonstration of its power, had been effective.

1. Bendish: Newes from Turkie (London, 1648) p. 9.

2. Ibid p. 14.

3. PRO SP97/6 f. 26 Glover to Salisbury, 16 Apr. 1608

The visit of another *çavuş* in 1640 was greeted with more organisation. John Finet was anxious to follow precedent for this unusual rank of visiting diplomat, but finding there was none, he arranged an adroit compromise between the escort of a peer, which was only suitable for bona fide ambassadors and the unescorted arrival of agents.¹

The decision to appoint Sir Peter Wych, the recently retired ambassador to the Porte as the Ottoman escort, gave the delegation respectable status, but did not disturb the regular order of diplomatic etiquette. It also meant that no misinterpretations of etiquette arose, as Wych had experience of Ottoman ceremonial. A similar compromise was reached by using the Lord Chamberlain's coach, rather than the King's, to escort the Ottoman *çavuş* to his audience at Whitehall.

The expense on the Company ensured that this diplomatic visit was concluded as speedily as possible within the bounds of diplomatic etiquette. Nevertheless, despite such haste, the display of hospitality was carefully promoted, with the Company providing a banquet in imitation of the Ottoman convention. The courtesy extended to this Ottoman of ambiguous status reflected the need to maintain good relations at a time when the Dutch were threatening English supremacy in the Levant trade and the French were gaining pre-eminence at the Porte.

Ottoman Motives for Reciprocal Diplomacy

One question which arises out of these visits is why the Ottoman Porte, which prided itself on an aloof sovereignty, decided to enter the reciprocal diplomacy of the West, albeit as a part-time player. In theoretical terms, the visits were not regarded as reciprocal delegations but rather the conveyance of the sultan's will to a lesser sovereign.

In practice, however, such visits did take on the form of diplomatic missions. Their purpose was often ambiguous and represented a tacit acknowledgement by the Porte that it could not remain ignorant of Western policy if it was to safeguard its European and coastal borders. The Porte was anxious to elicit direct responses to issues dealing with land and

¹ Finet: Ceremonies pp. 293-94

maritime strategies and alliances, but it was also making its first direct attempts to gather its own intelligence about Western allegiances. This argument is reinforced by the fact that both envoys whose visits are described above, visited both France and England, the major players at the Porte and the main anti-Habsburg states.

Whatever their prime objective, the occasional diplomatic representatives of the sultan at the English Court undoubtedly reported to higher Ottoman officials when they returned to the Porte. In addition to Glover's account of Mustafa's praise in 1607, Thomas Roe complained in 1622 that such men were 'rascalls that ever upon their returnes hither doe rather ill than good offices.'¹ Some diplomatic visitors from the Porte were clearly less generous in their comments than Mustafa. In Thomas Bendish's struggle with a pretender to his position, Henry Hide, the Grand Vizier called in a *çavuş*, who had visited England, to determine on what authority English ambassadors were appointed. His response was accurate and detailed, noting that appointment was by King, Parliament and Company, or by King and Company and that Hide had no commission while Bendish had commission from all three.²

The Porte was not, in practice, as detached from Western diplomacy as it purported to be. While direct Ottoman participation in Western-style diplomacy was infrequent, it did exist and was catered for within the normal etiquette of the English system.

On England's part, the motives for their acceptance of Ottoman officials and their attempts to find a place for an extra-reciprocal diplomat within their etiquette system, were a combination of strategic and commercial interests which made the effort worthwhile. Indeed, the English reaction to the Ottoman delegations may be interpreted as a necessary extension of their diplomatic activity at the Porte.

1. B.L. Harl. MS. 1580 f. 380 Roe to Duke of Buckingham, 31 May 1622.

2. PRO SP97/17 f. 38 Narrative of Hide's Proceedings at Smyrna and Constantinople, 3 Sept. 1650. The *çavuş* is named as Mustafa but is unlikely to be the same Mustafa who visited in 1607.

Crown and Company Control of the Embassy at Constantinople

The English embassy at Constantinople served a dual function, and as such, differed from the other resident embassies abroad established by the English. It was funded by the Levant Company, who used the ambassador as a commercial agent to promote their developing trade interests in the Ottoman Empire. However, it was considered a full diplomatic post, with its ambassador accredited by the Crown to pursue its policies abroad.

This duality provided ambassadors with a flexibility of action which their rivals at the Porte did not possess.¹ However, throughout this period, the issue of who actually controlled and appointed ambassadors was bitterly contested by the Crown and the Company. From the beginning, the Company realised that only a fully accredited ambassador would be able to serve their interests at the Porte. This left them in a weak bargaining position with the Crown, which had the power to appoint an ambassador, but was not prepared to pay for his expenses.

The Company's reluctance to take on the burden of payment was tempered by this need to maintain a full ambassador. Wrangling over the expenses of the embassy, may well explain why William Harborne (1583-88) was only described as an 'orator, deputie and agent.'² However, an examination of later royal commissions to ambassadors sent to the Porte suggests that the term 'orator' was synonymous with that of ambassador.³ This indicates that the Crown considered the representative at the Porte a full ambassador from the beginning, and that the Company had relented by accepting the costs of the embassy.

Certainly, full ambassadorial status was accepted by the Porte, but the Company hoped that, after an extravagant display of power and generosity, they might be able to send a cheaper representative to the Porte. This dream was never to be realised despite the Company's

1 See Niels Steensgaard: 'Consuls and Nations in the Levant from 1570 to 1650' Scandinavian Economic History Review 15 (1967) pp. 13-55, pp. 50-51; Palmira Brummet's Review of Daniel Goffman: Izmir and the Levantine World in TSAB 15 (1991) pp. 163-6.

2 Laura Coulter: 'An Examination of the Status and Activities of the English Ambassadors to the Ottoman Porte in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries' Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Europeennes 28 (1990) pp. 57-87, p. 61; Hakluyt, V pp. 221-4.

3 John Eyre was appointed as 'Oratorem Nunciam Procuratorem et Agentem nostrum verum et indubitatum ordinamus, facimus, et constituimus per presentes' on 14 December, 1619. See PRO SP103/72 f. 43.

frequent attempts to send an agent in place of an ambassador. This was particularly apparent at the end of Pindar's residence (1612-20), when the generous local privileges of the merchants were more tightly controlled.¹ In addition, the cost of maintaining the embassy had risen sharply. The Levant Company petitioned the Crown for the revocation of the ambassador and his replacement by a commercial agent.² This request was not realistic, given that the Ottoman system did not accept agents as accredited diplomatic or commercial representatives. Indeed, although Pindar used the threat of the removal of diplomatic links from the Porte to gain redress of English grievances, he also warned the Secretary of State that the deputy Vizier (*Kaymakam*) would not authorize his departure unless he was replaced by an ambassador.³ This situation left the Company dependent on the Crown for the appointment of ambassadors.

It was the Company's attempts to control ambassadors to the Porte which brought them into conflict with the Crown. The established system was that the Company would present three suitable candidates to the Crown, which would then select its appointee.⁴ In the Company's eyes, this answered the convention of Crown appointments, but should have ensured that sympathetic candidates were chosen. Indeed, in Charles I's reign, the Company argued that it had the right to choose the ambassador and that the role of the Crown was merely to approve their selection.⁵ Roe, when advising his wife's uncle, Lord Grandison, about possible successors, recognised that the merchants must play some role in the selection. He warned:

'it is the Company that pays the chardge and if any bee sent agaynst their will, ther will remayne a secrett grudge and dislike which will breake out here,

¹ See below p. 143 ff.

² PRO SP97/7 f. 191 Answer of the Levant Company concerning the recall of the Ambassador, 23 Nov. 1618 lists the reasons why the Company wanted to replace the ambassador with an agent.

³ PRO SP97/7 f. 196 Pindar to Secretary of State, 25 Jul. 1619.

⁴ For this convention, see PRO SP104/167 f. 161 Secretary Conway to Roe, 6 Dec. 1626.

⁵ CSPD 1625-6 p. 66 Governor and Company of the Levant Company to Secretary Conway, 19 Jul. 1625.

to their losse and his Majesties dishonor. Of this, I have good experience.’¹

The Company, like Roe, feared that the merchants were being increasingly neglected in the choice of ambassadors and considered this to be an erosion of their privileges.

For the Crown, however, the post provided a useful source of patronage. Roe was aware that the Crown was keen to use the ambassadorship as such when he pleaded with the Duke of Buckingham ‘to take rather the protection of a Company that cast themselves into his armes than the care of any privat man’s fortune or ambition.’² Indeed, the appointment of Roe himself, John Eyre (1620–22) and Sackville Crow, who were royal proteges, suggests that, at times, the Crown used the Constantinople appointment to exile problematic courtiers. Eyre was known for his quick temper and was notorious for publicly fighting with Edward Herbert, who he considered had ‘whor’d his wife’ in 1610, and for attempting to pursue the grievance on his return from service in Ireland.³ Roe, while undoubtedly an able diplomat, had been associated with the radical politics of the Earl of Southampton. He had attempted to persuade England to support the cause of the King and Queen of Bohemia in the first session of the 1621 Parliament. Crow had been removed from his post as treasurer to the Navy following rumours of corruption in 1629 and had been gently pushed to the outer circle at Court.⁴ These men had mixed fortunes in their service at the Porte and the unpopularity of men like Eyre and Crow with the merchants highlighted the conflict between Crown and Company appointees.

Most of the men chosen were compromises between the Crown and the Company. This

1 PRO SP97/10 f. 271 Roe to Lord Grandison, 21/31 May 1625. Roe knew how the merchants had resented his crown-imposed predecessor, John Eyre.

2 Roe summarised his suggestions to Buckingham in PRO SP97/10 f. 257 Roe to Mr. Donne, 4 May 1624/5.

3 Edward Herbert: Autobiography (Ed.) S. Lee (London, 1886) pp. 128–139.

4 For Roe’s position, see S.L. Adams: ‘Foreign Policy and the Parliaments of 1621 and 1624’ in Kevin Sharpe: Faction and Parliament (Oxford, Clarendon, 1978) pp. 139–173, pp. 144–45. For Crow, see CSPD 1637 p. 398 no. 80 Governors of Chest at Chatham to Lords of Admiralty, Aug. 1637; R. Ashton: ‘The Disbursing Official’ BIHR XXX (1957) pp. 167–74, p. 165 and G.E. Aylmer: The King’s Servants: The Civil Service of Charles I 1625–42 (2nd Ed., London, 1974) p. 367.

meant that, although ambassadors were funded by the Company and generally sympathetic to the merchants' affairs, they were also able administrators and often experienced diplomats. The first English ambassadors at the Porte, from Barton (1588-97) to Pindar had served as administrators in the Constantinople embassy prior to their appointment; Roe had already played the role of diplomatic trouble-shooter at the Mogul and Persian Courts, while Bendish had been a local, domestic administrator. These men undoubtedly saw the Constantinople appointment as a route to better domestic administrative positions on their return.¹

Their abilities and administrative ambitions made the Company anxious. Ambassadors were undertaking increasing amounts of diplomatic work and needing greater allowances to enable them to pursue these non-commercial affairs. This rise in diplomatic business brought the conflict over who should maintain the costs of the embassy sharply into focus.

The Company had agreed to finance the embassy in Constantinople with an annual allowance of two hundred pounds sterling for Harborne. He managed successfully on less, taking only four hundred for his entire residence, and leaving the rest for his return.² However, the Company was often slow in paying ambassadors and, as early as Barton's residence, the ambassador was complaining that he had insufficient funds to perform his task satisfactorily.³ From the first decade of the seventeenth century, when the costs of maintenance and negotiations increased, the Company's allowance to the ambassador became inadequate.

Ambassadors were quick to complain and used the Crown to put pressure on the Company for repayment of debts. Barton used Lord Burghley to protest that his allowance of one thousand pounds was insufficient.⁴ At the same time, there was a desire on the part of

1 This follows the general career pattern of many state administrators in the seventeenth century. Both Maurice Lee: 'The Jacobean Diplomatic Service' American Historical Review 72 (1967) pp. 1264-1282, p. 1266 and Lachs: Diplomatic Corps *passim* have established that ambitious men took undesirable jobs away from home to further their political career.

2 Bodl. Tanner MS. 77 f. 1.

3 Sanderson: Travels Barton made his complaint in a letter to Sanderson of 7 Oct. 1595.

4 HMC Salisbury, IV p. 578; for the Company's response, VI p. 385

the ambassadors to be freed from the outright financial control of the Company. Barton, in his letter of complaint to Burghley, outlined the way in which other ambassadors at the Porte were funded. The suggestion was, that even if the Crown was not prepared to take on the full burden of funding, it could grant ambassadors the right to collect 'Strangers' Consulage' to supplement their maintenance allowance.

The issue of the right to grant collection of 'Strangers' Consulage' emerged as the main point of contention in the dispute over control of the ambassador. This tax was a protective measure used by all the foreign communities at the Porte to recover some tax from their own ships when they freighted foreign goods to the Ottoman territories. It was collected by the consul, resident at each port. The Company wanted to be free to use it for commercial business at a local level, while ambassadors argued that, since the mainstay of commercial business was their representations at the Porte, it should be used to maintain them. The Company restricted the use of taxes at a local level, ordering ambassadors with extraordinary expenses to be examined by two chosen Company deputies. The role of the deputies was to assess the extent of ambassadorial need and supply them only with funds when specific need arose.¹ Since much of the unforeseen expenditure went on bribes, this made the system unworkable and ambassadors were often forced to bribe Ottoman officials from their own pockets.

In the time of Glover's residence, the Company and ambassador seem to have come to a tacit agreement that consulage could be used to support the ambassador but when the unpopular John Eyre attempted to do the same, the Company petitioned the Privy Council, complaining that Eyre's seizure of consulage endangered agents and factors 'both in their persons and estates.'² Eyre retaliated by echoing Barton's complaints, arguing that only the king and council should be involved in selecting an ambassador to the Porte and deciding his allowance. He outlined the way that other ambassadors got their revenue and noted that all

¹ Peter Mundy: Travels in Europe and Asia 1608-67 5 Vols. (Hakluyt Soc., 2nd Ser., 1907) (Ed.) Richard Carnac Temple, I p. 173 Appendix D: The Levant Company and its agents at Constantinople in Mundy's Time.

² PRO SP97/7 f. 216 Petition of Levant Company to Privy Council against Eyre, 1620.

were paid from trade by their prince's order. He complained 'their merchants are subject unto them but I am subject unto the merchants.'¹

The dispute between Eyre and the merchants was particularly acrimonious because the Company considered him a Crown imposition on them. Probably because of his ties to the Court, the issue was not completely resolved in the tribunal against Eyre, conducted on his return to England. The council committee ruled that because the Company had broken its contract with Eyre first, by not paying his annual salary, and recalling Eyre before his contract expired, he should be allowed to keep the extra money but must drop further claims for consulage.² The ruling on Eyre did not establish whether the right of consulage lay in the hands of the Crown or the Company and thus stored up problems for his successors, Wych and Crow.

His immediate successor, Roe, managed to avoid dispute over consulage but even he found that the Company was slow to recompense ambassadors for the expense of diplomatic business. He found himself not only paying initially for the negotiations to resolve the piracy problem but also for other public business without relief from the Company.³ He complained that he felt like a trapped apprentice because he was not being properly paid for his service but wanted to stay until a successor sympathetic to the merchants could be found.⁴

Wych and Crow were not so fortunate and both became embroiled in long legal cases with the Company over Consulage. The Crown began to have a higher profile in these debates as ambassadors claimed their right to consulage from the Crown. In Wych's case, the Crown stated its position clearly for the first time, ruling:

1 PRO SP97/8 ff. 21-2 Eyre to Lords of Council, 10 Apr. 1621.

2 CSPD 1619-23 p. 413 no. 79 Committee of Council to Council, 27 Jun. 1622.

3 Negs. pp. 117-19 Roe to Lords of King's Council 25 Jan. 1622/3.

4 PRO SP97/11 f. 168 Roe to Lord Grandison, 3 Dec. 1625.

'the consulage of the strangers goods brought in English shipps to or from Constantinople or any other ports of the Grand Signior's dominions doth clearly belong to his Majestie and that his right is not devested by anything conteyned or expressed in any letters pattents or under the signe manuell, that have been shewed, or any pretence made therunto by any parties, but that the same doth still remaine in his Majestie's to be disposed of accordinge to his good will and pleasure which hee will take unto his owne consideracion.'¹

This was in keeping with the general tone of Charles' government immediately before the outbreak of civil war in 1642. The Company was correct in their concern that the Crown was attempting to seize greater control over the embassy without directly financing it. Indeed, it appears that the Crown had adopted Eyre's sentiments on the matter of funding ambassadors through grants of consulage, which had recently gained new expression in a document entitled 'Reasons and Precedents to Induce his Majestie to Imploy Ambassadors in Turkie of his own nominacion with more honor and noe more charge then heretofore without beholdinge to the Turkie Merchants'.²

This stance had worrying implications for the Company since it meant that, in future, ambassadors with grants of consulage would be able to take it regularly from the merchants. In addition, the above document suggested that if the merchants refused to accept this form of funding ambassadors, the king should refuse to send an ambassador. It highlighted the fact that without royal appointment, the Company would be forced either to abandon the Ottoman trade completely, or to transport their goods under another nation's flag. Once again, the Company's dependence on the Crown for accrediting ambassadors rendered them vulnerable to pressure from the Crown.

The Company's worst fears were realised when Sackville Crow took up the ambassadorship in 1638. He held a formal grant of Strangers Consulage from the King 'to make his employment as beneficiall to him as it hath beene to any of his predicessiors.'³ In one sense, the Crown was responding to the demands of successive ambassadors for greater control over their expenditure at the Porte to enable them to conduct diplomatic business

1 B.L. Egerton Ms. 2541 f. 209 Meeting at Whitehall, 25 Mar. 1640.

2 B.L. Harl. MS. 1580 f. 392, undated, anonymous document.

3 B.L. Egerton MS. 2541 ff. 200-201 Charles I to Levant Company, 25 Jul. 1636.

without constraint, but the practice proved difficult to implement without the full consent of the merchant community.

The resentment of the merchants against a perceived erosion of their privileges was exacerbated by Crow's new commission of 21 March 1645 when he was empowered by Charles I to confiscate the goods, lands and funds of all merchants and to arrest any merchants rebelling against the king. This was a desperate attempt to gain some funds for the war, as Crow was instructed to send any money raised from the confiscated capital, via Richard Forster in Paris, to support the king.¹ The confiscations turned the merchants to outright rebellion against Crow and only his forcible revocation by Thomas Bendish, who held a double commission from the king and Parliament, calmed the merchants.²

The Company managed to take advantage of the weak position of the King at this time, by forcing him to allow them to decide the ambassador's salary 'according to your ancient rights and customs so as that neither the Strangers Consulage, nor any undue profits whatsoever be exacted from you, upon any pretence from us or president of former ambassador.' This concession was only possible in the extraordinary environment of the civil war and the Company continued to battle for the return of consulage when Crow returned to England.³ Since accusations about his collection of consulage were also bound up with his efforts at confiscation and his royalist attitude, the matter of consulage remained undecided.

Indeed, if the Company had hoped to gain greater control over the embassy under Oliver Cromwell, they were disappointed. Cromwell was concerned with diplomacy at the Porte because he wanted both to ensure the security of expanding foreign trade and to maintain a favourable balance of power for Protestant nations.⁴ A document of circa 1652,

1 B.L. Egerton MS. 2533 f. 438 Copy of his Majesty's Commission to Crow, 21 Mar. 1645/6 and ff. 439-39a King's Instructions to Crow, 21 Mar. 1645/6.

2 Bodl. Rawl. Ms. C 799 Robert Bargrave: A Relation of Sundry Voyages.

3 PRO SP105/143 f. 117 Charles I to Levant Company, Newcastle, 5 Jan. 1646/7.

4 For Cromwell's reorganisation of the departments dealing with foreign affairs, see G.E. Aylmer: The State's Servants, The Civil Service of the English Republic 1649-60 (London, 1973) p. 258.

probably an internal memorandum debating the role of the Company, argued against merchant claims of control, stating

'it is denyed that the sending of an ambassador into Turkey is solely about the merchants affaires whereas it is as well or more to defend the publique interest, honor and safety of the state.'

The document continued by suggesting that it is imperative that an ambassador must be beyond the control of the Company for 'if this ambassador have not power to refraine their [merchants'] excesses, they will at one time or other sett us at warre with the Turk.' Finally, citing the case of Thomas Bendish, who had agreed to receive a salary of two thousand pounds, although his full due of consulage was eight thousand, it was argued that the ambassador was not paid by the Company but through national and strangers' consulage and that he subsidized the Company through such consulage.¹ By 1654, Cromwell was taking steps to have consulage collected in his name.² The Commonwealth, like the Crown, was not willing to relinquish power to the Company and by the time of the Restoration in 1660, the Company found it more difficult to control the consulage for which it had fought for so long.

The appointment in 1661, of Heneage Finch, Earl of Winchilsea (1660-69) illustrates the extent to which the Crown had gained control of the Constantinople post. The Crown became more directly responsible for determining embassy policy. Although the Company continued to provide funds for the embassy, and the ambassador's staff were supplied mainly from Company personnel, the Company could never again claim that the main function of the embassy was commercial and that the ambassador was a Company appointment.

The Status of the English Ambassador to the Porte

The position of the English ambassador to the Porte within the English diplomatic hierarchy and the efforts of the Crown to retain control over the embassy, suggest that the Crown had a greater diplomatic interest in the Porte than it is traditionally credited with. Its

1 Bodl. Rawl. Ms. A 14 f. 394 The Pretence of the Turkey Company for Nominating of an Ambassador to the Grand Signor.

2 CSPD 1653-54 p. 419 Order to Council, 24 Feb. 1654.

dual status placed the embassy to the Porte lower in the diplomatic hierarchy than the other four resident embassies: those to Spain, France, the Habsburg Emperor and the United Provinces, which were funded entirely by the Crown.¹ Such Crown funding is to be expected in embassies to England's immediate neighbours and such powerful players in European politics as France, the Holy Roman Empire and Spain. What is significant is that the embassy to the Porte was ranked immediately below these resident embassies. This indicates that it was still a priority within the system. Given the strategic importance of the Ottoman Empire on both the Mediterranean and the Central European axis of power, this prominent position and the growing involvement of the Crown becomes less surprising. The development of the diplomatic role of the English embassy at the Porte emphasises that in the seventeenth century, England and the Ottoman Empire were no longer completely separated from one another in their policy concerns.

¹ Aylmer: King's Servants p. 26

PART II

ADMINISTRATION AT THE ENGLISH EMBASSY IN CONSTANTINOPLE

CHAPTER III. PERSONNEL AT THE ENGLISH EMBASSY

The wide range of administrative business which the embassy conducted at the Porte depended on able and efficient staff. An analysis of some of these administrative officers, both English and local staff, indicates that they provided cohesion and continuity, enabling ambassadors to maintain and develop the policies of their predecessors.

Key embassy staff, like the ambassadors themselves, were funded by the Company. The Company paid a physician, chaplain, treasurer and secretary, and provided funds for four or five *dragomans*, and four *janissaries*, who were loaned from the Porte.¹ The treasurer and usually one secretary were members of the Company. Despite this dependence on the Company for finance and personnel, embassy staff were not solely Company men, more interested in commercial affairs than diplomatic business. The separate residences of the factors, merchants and embassy illustrate that embassy staff were considered separate from the trading Community at large. Furthermore, trade conducted by administrative staff was restricted by the Company, to prevent the administration becoming embroiled in quarrels which regularly broke out among the merchant community. The ambassador himself was prohibited from trading and his officials were expected to follow his example.² This suggests that, in the eyes of the Company, the administrative staff was regarded as a separate career branch within the Company structure. This is supported by the career patterns of several employees of the English embassy.

The Ambassadors

1 For Harborne's embassy staff, see Bodl. Tanner MSS. 79 f. 150, reproduced and assessed in Skilliter: 'Organisation'. For Roe's staff, see PRO SP105/110 ff. 134-6.

2 Mordechai Epstein: The Early History of the Levant Company (London, 1908) p. 88. Consuls were also prohibited from trade for the duration of their appointment, see PRO SP105/144 f. 26 Articles with Henry Riley, Consul for Aleppo, 29 Jan. 1649/50.

The first ambassadors are good examples of men who chose an administrative path within the Company. Barton (1588-97), who had been Harborne's secretary, was succeeded by his own secretary, Lello (1597-1606). Glover (1606-12) had served as a secretary and translator to Barton, and later to Lello, while Pindar (1612-20) acted as secretary to Lello and then as Consul in Aleppo before promotion to ambassador. Pindar went on to hold state administrative positions on his retirement, while Glover appears to have continued within the Company administration.¹ The benefit of this system was that new ambassadors were familiar with the job from the beginning. This prevented a hiatus in embassy business while ambassadors accustomed themselves to the job.

After 1620, ambassadors no longer emerged from within the Company, but generally came with state administrative experience.² From this time on, it was necessary to implement a hand-over period to compensate for the lack of direct experience of the Ottoman system. This worked well when the ambassador was as conscientious as Thomas Roe (1622-28), who instructed his successor, Peter Wych (1628-39), in minute detail. Roe even corresponded with Wych about policy during his voyage home. Some ambassadors were less willing to pass on advice about the post to their successors. John Eyre (1620-22) was so frustrated with his treatment by the merchant community that he was not prepared to help Roe settle into the post. Sackville Crow (1639-47) not only refused to accept Thomas Bendish (1647-60) as a legitimate ambassador but had to be forcibly removed from Turkey in an English ship. Although the Crow case was exceptional, the result was the same on both occasions. The new ambassadors had to depend on the skill of their ambassadorial staff to guide their actions.

The English Staff

The nature of the personnel structure of the embassy meant that ambassadors were supported by experienced staff. Behind the scenes, administrative officers and advisers gave

¹ For Pindar's later administrative career, see Robert Ashton: The Crown and the Money Market 1603-40 (Oxford, 1960), pp. 96-98, 104-105 and for Glover's continued Company role, see PRO SP105/103 f. 53a Company Court of Constantinople, 18 Apr. 1622.

² See above, p. 91 ff.

vital continuity to the routine of the embassy. Such was the career pattern of George Vernon, who first appeared in Roe's residence. He checked Turkish translations and was involved in the Algiers negotiations, although he was rejected as consul for Algiers on account of his youth.¹ He worked his way up through the administrative ranks, with a period in England, and was sent back out to Constantinople to prepare for Bendish's arrival at the Porte. In one account he was described as chief interpreter, while Crow regarded him as a Company agent sent with letters to the sultan and Grand Vizier.² This indicates that, just as the early ambassadors had been promoted from within the system, so able officials could rise in the administrative hierarchy.

The careers of other staff reinforce this pattern of promotion within the embassy. Another key figure at the embassy in Bendish's residence was James Modyford. Although he played an active trading role in the early 1640s, by 1646 he was one of the administrative personnel alienated by Crow's attitude to the embassy. Crow was not prepared to work in tandem with embassy staff, regarding them as subservient and inferior to him. Modyford attempted to protect the role of the administrative staff by supporting an unsuccessful attempt to replace Crow with a Company man, John Lancelot.³ That Modyford had considerable local experience is evident from his ability to speak Turkish and his role as Bendish's spokesman at the Porte during Henry Hide's attempt to usurp Bendish's position.⁴

In addition to these experienced staff, there were also younger trainees. These were men who sought an administrative career, either in the Company itself or using the Company

1 PRO SP105/103 f. 94a Company Court of Constantinople, 9 Apr. 1623.

2 See Bodl. Rawl. MSS. C 799 Robert Bargrave: *Sundry Voyages*, f. 1 and B.L. Egerton MSS. 2533 f. 429-33.

3 See below, p. 127 ff.

4 For Modyford's disillusionment with Crow and his involvement in his removal, see PRO SP105/143 f. 143: Levant Company to Committee for Navy against Sackville Crow. For his role in the Hide case, see Bodl. Rawl. MSS. C 799 f. 32. After service with the Company, he settled as a merchant in Chelsea before performing administrative duties in Ireland for the Commonwealth authorities. He was unsuccessfully proposed as a prospective ambassador to the Porte in 1666 and became Lieutenant-General, Deputy Governor and Chief Judge of the Admiralty in Jamaica where his brother Thomas was Governor in 1667. See DNB entry.

to gain experience, often switching to state service later. An example of the former is Robert Bargrave, who accompanied Thomas Bendish to Constantinople.¹ Although described as a factor, he was placed in the household of James Modyford, which suggests that he was training as an administrator.² This is supported by his attendance at, and subsequent account of, Bendish's imperial audience. His imprisonment by the Hide faction is another indication that he was closely connected with Bendish's embassy.³ Although he returned to England in 1652 together with Modyford, Bargrave continued to train and was later appointed as Company secretary to Bendish's successor, Winchilsea (1660-69).⁴

Other men who pursued this type of training included John Wroth, who had been sent out as a member of Harborne's retinue. He was mentioned by his cousin Henry Wotton as a possible replacement for Barton in 1592, and later by Chamberlain as a possible successor to Barton in August 1598.⁵ Likewise, Jonathan Dawes who was imprisoned with Bargrave, became treasurer in Constantinople under Bendish and acted as adviser to Winchilsea before returning to England in June 1661.⁶

Some trainee administrators were apprenticed to ambassadors, such as Robert Withers who arrived as a protégé of Paul Pindar. He acted as a personal secretary and learned

1 Bargrave was the younger son of Isaac Bargrave, Dean of Canterbury. Little more is known about Robert except that he is buried with his five children in Canterbury Cathedral, see DNB entry on Isaac Bargrave.

2 PRO SP105/144 f. 31 Levant Company to Council of State against Henry Hide, 8 Jan. 1650/1.

3 See Bodl. Rawl. MSS. C 799, Robert Bargrave: Sundry Voyages ff. 35-37.

4 Consul pp. 25-7. Bargrave died at Smyrna before he could take up the appointment.

5 For Wroth's inclusion in Harborne's retinue, see Bodl. Tanner MSS. 79 f. 150; for his potential promotion, Pearsall Smith: Sir Henry Wotton, Life and Letters (Oxford, 1967) I p. 261 Henry Wotton to Lord Zouche, 3 Dec. 1592; Chamberlain I, no. 9, Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 30 Aug. 1598.

6 HMC 71 Finch I p. 127 Winchelsea to King, 15 Jun. 1661: Dawes married Bendish's daughter Anne and later became a financier to the Crown: see ERO D/DHf 025; Richard Grassby: 'English Merchant Capitalism in the late Seventeenth Century: The Composition of Business Fortunes' P&P 46 (1970) pp. 57-107 p. 91.

Turkish.¹ Indeed, the embassy appears to have been an accepted route to gain administrative experience, and Roe and Bendish used their relatives as secretaries at the embassy.² Not only was the work skilled, but it required knowledge of Latin and Italian. As John Sanderson pointed out in 1599, this made it an ideal first post for young gentlemen administrators who 'had the lattin tounge perfect.'³

Some sought experience in embassy administration as a stepping stone to a state career. Administrative positions in foreign embassies were less keenly contested than domestic appointments because established administrators preferred to climb the smoother promotion ladder at Court. This made service abroad a good way for young merchants and lesser gentry with administrative ambitions to acquire experience.

James Howell tried unsuccessfully to gain a position as Eyre's secretary. His father considered it preferable to his earlier involvement in the Venetian glass industry which was 'too brittle a foundation for me to build my fortune upon.' Although he failed on this occasion, he later served the Company in Spain and then moved into State service when he accompanied Robert Sidney's embassy to Denmark as secretary.⁴

Another option was to start as an administrator in the embassy and then seek promotion in the consulates of the Levant Company. This was the path chosen for Edward Kirkham, who was brother of James I's signet clerk.⁵ Originally a merchant in Constantinople, he had been selected as commercial agent to replace Pindar. In the event, the

1 See Wither's account of Pindar's residence in Purchas IX p. 321 and as a member of Pindar's retinue, Peter Mundy: Travels I p. 35.

2 See PRO SP97/8 f. 158a Roe to Sir John Finet, 5 May 1622.

3 Sanderson: Travels p. 188 John Sanderson to the Levant Company, 1 Dec. 1599.

4 Howell went to Spain at the time of the proposed Spanish match to act on the Company's behalf in a legal suit over the capture of an English merchant ship off Sardinia, see James Howell: Epistolae Ho-Eliaanae, Familiar Letters (5th Ed., London, 1678), I pp. 68-9 James Howell to Dr. Mansell, 5 Mar. 1618; On Howell's later career, see Daniel Woolf: 'Conscience, Constancy and Ambition in the Career and Writings of James Howell' in Public Duty and Private Conscience in Seventeenth Century England (eds.) John Morrill, Paul Slack & Daniel Woolf (Clarendon, Oxford, 1993) pp.243-78, p. 246.

5 PRO SP97/10 f. 271 Roe to Lord Grandison, 30 Apr. 1625.

Porte refused to recognise an agent and so Eyre was sent as ambassador. However, Kirkham's administrative skills did not remain unrewarded and he was appointed consul of Aleppo in 1622.¹ This branch suited men whose main interest was in commercial administration; it also ensured that the embassy was supported by a network of consulates run by men with embassy experience.

The careers of the staff outlined above were selected because enough evidence survives to describe their promotion within and beyond the Company. However, the pattern is common to other English officials at the embassy.² This reinforces the argument that the embassy staff were a loyal, skilled and reliable corps of administrators. They safeguarded the continuity and uniformity of chancery practice by providing training and a variety of promotion options to attract able personnel. Successive ambassadors attempted to reinforce this structure in the appointment and training of 'local' staff.

The Local Staff At The English Embassy

The local servants were used by the embassy for translation, interpreting and intelligence work. Many were not native-born Turks but were subject of the Ottoman Empire, often Greek or Jewish, who sought the improved status offered by service at the Porte. Others were foreigners who had 'turned Turk' for a prosperous, albeit insecure, career in the sultan's household.³

Vital services for the administrative and household management of the embassy involved contact with the Turkish-speaking Porte and city of Constantinople, and required Turkish speakers. The duties of the *janissaries* and *dragomans* loaned from the Porte to the

1 PRO SP105/103 f. 45 Copy of letters to Mr.Kirkham for his establishment as consul of Aleppo, 1 Oct. 1622.

2 In this wide sweep of embassy administration, it is not possible to pursue detailed case studies, but, given the detailed Company records, more research in this area would prove productive, illustrating that young lesser gentry and merchants transferred regularly from Company to state administration, in accordance with more general patterns of diplomatic service in seventeenth century England.

3 For Thomas Dallam's account of a two English *dragomans*, see Dallam's Diary in Bent: Early Travels pp. 79, 84.

embassy were established by Harborne. He placed janissaries on guard outside the embassy and also used them to guard English travellers while they were in Constantinople. In the disturbed 1620s, an extra janissary was placed in the merchant community at Galata to police the area.¹

Harborne divided interpreting tasks among the *dragomans*: one was to present petitions to the sultan and accompany the ambassador on all official visits, while another was to report complaints to the Grand Vizier, obtain the English provision from the Porte and provide information on Porte affairs.² The third dealt with household matters, including the buying of food.³ These tasks remained almost unchanged throughout this period.

Most of the local staff employed at the English embassy appear to have been of Greek or Italian origin, thus possessing a good knowledge of Italian and sometimes Latin, as well as the Turkish skills for which they were appointed. Janissaries and *dragomans* were leased from the Porte but, increasingly, the embassy tried to use native speakers independent of the Porte's control. It also used and trained Turkish speakers from the English community.

There were several reasons for this gradual shift from using Porte officials to finding Turkish-speaking staff. Firstly, servants of the Porte were just that, even when they were loaned to an embassy. Sir Thomas Sherley, who was particularly jaundiced against the Turks having spent some months in the Yedikule prison in Constantinople, believed that the English could not hope to gain good service from local staff. He argued that although the English embassy was paying the staff, they were the sultan's subjects and therefore, served him.⁴ Interpreters played a dual role of reporting the situation in the English embassy to the sultan

1 For a traveller's experience of janissaries, see Fynes Moryson: *Itinerary* (Glasgow, 1904), II pp. 90-1, III p. 406; for the decision to place a janissary on guard in the merchant community, see PRO SP105/102 f. 70 Company Court at Constantinople, 1 Feb. 1622/3.

2 The Porte's provision was an allowance of food and fuel which appears to have been awarded as a mark of high favour. Sackville Crow suggested that it was first allowed to Edward Barton and was lost by Paul Pindar, when he allowed the French ambassador to have precedence: see PRO SP97/16 f. 193 Crow's Requests to King Concerning Consulage, 1638. This implies that the sultan's provision was a mark of 'most favoured nation status.'

3 Bodl. Tanner MSS. 79 ff. 179-80.

4 Thomas Sherley: *Discourse of the Turkes* (ed.) E. Denison Ross (London, 1936) pp. 14-15

and ensuring that documents and speeches presented by the English left an advantage with the Porte.

The English saw the extent of the problem when, as one of John Sanderson's correspondents reported in 1603, Thomas Glover took up the post of interpreter. With Glover's command of Turkish and his knowledge of the law, 'the deceipte and gile of his drugaman, as also theire simplicitie in not rightly declaringe a matter, maie be apprehended and amended.'¹ Sometimes, misinterpretations were unintentional but the English were suspicious about such accidents.

In addition, interpreters were often afraid to present complaints to the sultan or Vizier. That they were vulnerable in this position is attested by Thomas Roe's audience with the Grand Vizier in July 1622, where, when Roe complained about abuse of commercial privilege, the Vizier threatened 'to hang my secretary and drogerman if they spake in my cause.'² Even with the various efforts of the ambassadors to overcome this problem, in 1656, Bendish's chief interpreter was accused of corrupting Porte officials in favour of the Venetians and was briefly imprisoned.³

Finally, as the English became more involved in maintaining the balance of power in the European buffer-zone between the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires, security became a greater concern. Allan Cunningham has suggested that it was in the nineteenth century that ambassadors became wary of their local *dragomans* as a security risk.⁴ In fact, from the early seventeenth century, ambassadors attempted to ensure the loyalty of their local staff to limit the amount of intelligence they passed on to the Porte.

One way in which the embassy encouraged loyalty was to use the same families. This

1 Sanderson: Travels p. 221 John Ker at Scio (Chios) to John Sanderson in London, 9 Aug. 1603

2 Negs. pp. 61-3 Roe to Secretary Calvert, 1 Jul. 1622.

3 Bodl. Rawl. MS. A 56 f. 238 Bendish to Cromwell, 23 Dec. 1656.

4 Allan Cunningham: "'Dragomania': The *Dragomans* of the British Embassy in Turkey' in St. Antony's Papers II (1961) pp. 81-100, p. 87.

provided continuity in chancery practice, as fathers trained their sons within the embassy, and weaned the families away from dependence on the Porte. In one such case in Roe's residence, an old *dragoman*, Laneroto, asked that his son, 'a youth daily attending about his Lordship's court and ready to doe such services in that kind as he was able' be admitted as a *dragoman*. Although the embassy had its full quota, funded by the Company, Roe accepted the boy in recognition that his father was already training him and in the hope that 'being employed so young, he might prove more faithfull to the nation when he should be of age and full capacity.'¹

Other attempts to develop the reliability of local staff included Roe's practice of swearing new *dragomans* into service under oath made on the Bible. *Dragomans* swore allegiance to the English Crown, and faithfulness to the English ambassador and community in the Ottoman Empire. Significantly, they also had to promise not to hide any information concerning English interests and agree to deliver, in full, any embassy communications to the Porte.² How well this particular method worked is difficult to assess, although minutes from the *Company Court* at Constantinople suggest that *dragomans* continued to swear such an oath throughout Roe's residence.

The proof of the embassy's efforts is visible in the service they received from their local staff. One outstanding example is that of Timone Dominico who first served as Company Secretary at the Porte under Paul Pindar. Although discharged by John Eyre, who shared Thomas Sherley's suspicion of local staff, he resumed his former position under Roe, acting as one of the ambassador's main sources of information. He remained as Company Secretary, with the exception of one brief period in 1647 when he refused to support Sackville Crow's confiscation of merchants' goods, until his death in 1649.³ Not only responsible for translation work, he also transcribed Court minutes and cases arising in the merchants' court.

1 PRO SP105/102 f. 48 Company Court of Constantinople, 29 May 1622.

2 PRO SP105/102 Company Court of Constantinople, 5 Jan. 1621/2

3 See CSPV 1643-47 pp. 291-2 no. 455 Giovanni Soranzo, Venetian Bailo to Doge and Senate, 5 Dec. 1646; B.L. Add. MS. 15750 ff. 32-33 Bendish to King [1647/8].

He was highly regarded by both embassy staff and the Company alike. Even Crow described him as 'a person of an undoubted esteeme and unquestioned full faith and creditt' while the Company noted, on his death, 'his long service and total dependence on the Company and of his great and general experience as interpreter.'¹ This was the type of man which the embassy was anxious to employ and, from other examples of long-serving staff, it appears that overall the English were relatively successful with their local staff.

Nevertheless, successes like that of Timone Dominico were not sufficient to ensure the complete security of English interests. Some attempts were made to achieve this by training Englishmen to translate and interpret from Turkish and also to gain proficiency in Ottoman chancery practice.

English Linguists

In the early years, administrators took it upon themselves to learn Turkish. Barton acquired proficiency in the language as Harborne's secretary while Thomas Glover, the most skilled Turkish speaker in the embassy, had grown up in Istanbul.² This gained them respect with Porte officials and made communications easier and more accurate.³ There were problems in using Englishmen in this capacity. Whereas mistakes by local servants were viewed as misinterpretation, errors by English interpreters could be regarded as political statements. In 1599 for instance, the *Kaymakam*, Halil Paşa, tried to capitalise on Glover's interpretation of Henri IV's conversion as turning from good religion to idolatry. On this occasion, the French ambassador grudgingly accepted Glover's excuse that he did not know

¹ See B.L. Egerton MS. 2541 f. 310-10a; CSPD 1649-50 p. 89 Levant Company to Sir Thomas Bendish, 15 Apr. 1649.

² For Glover's background, see Appendix I and C.E. Bosworth: 'William Lithgow of Lanark's Travels in Greece and Turkey 1609-11' Bulletin of John Ryland's Library 65 (1983) pp. 8-36, pp. 24-25.

³ On Ottoman respect, see Fynes Moryson: Shakespeare's Europe (ed.) C. Hughes (London, 1903) pp. 27-31.

how else to explain the difference between Catholics and Protestants.¹ Clearly, there were limits to the benefits of using English staff as interpreters.

It was useful to have English personnel able to check drafts of documents both to and from the Porte. George Vernon acted in this capacity, inspecting drafts for capitulations and the Algiers piracy negotiations.² Robert Withers' language training prepared him for the same task. This training policy mirrored that of the Venetians who, according to Thomas Sherley, 'bringe upp young Venetians in Galata to learne to speake and write Turkishe, and doe make interpretors of them.'³ It is difficult to assess how far the English training policy went, but there were evidently a small corps of English staff able to operate as a check to their local counterparts.

Checking documents became essential as the embassy grew more involved with the Poles and later the Transylvanians, and ambassadors frequently found themselves consulting with the Imperial Chancery and its chief scribe, the *Reisülküttab*. In Roe's residence, several imperial drafts were sent back to the Porte for correction on subtle language points by the ambassador.⁴ On one occasion, he appears to have visited the *Reisülküttab*'s office to direct the wording of a summary of the sultan's letters and commands to Bethlen Gabor.⁵ It is not clear whether Roe himself spoke Turkish or was relying on Timone Dominico. Nevertheless, one thing was certain: the ability of the embassy staff to act in a consultative administrative

1 See Mayes: *Organ* Mayes wrongly attributes Halil Paşa with the Grand Vizierate, but see Danişmend: *Kronoloji* III p. 192 for Halil Paşa's appointment as *Kaimakam*.

2 PRO SP105/102 f. 24a Company Court of Constantinople, 4 Mar. 1621/2. For the Algiers negotiations, see below p. 191 ff.

3 Sherley: *Discourse*. M. Lesure in 'Michel Černovič "Explorator Secretus" à Constantinople' *Turcica* 15 (1983) pp. 127-54, pp. 137-38 notes that the Venetian Senate decided to train young Venetians as an alternative to local *dragomans* as early as 1551, although the students had still not acquired a sufficient level by 1558. The French later copied this idea when Louis XIV established schools for 'Jeunes de Langues' in 1669 at Constantinople and Smyrna: see Bedrettin Tuncel: 'L'Age des Drogmans' in *Istanbul à la Jonction des Cultures Balkaniques, Méditerranéennes, Slaves et Orientales aux XVI-XIXe Siècles*: International Association of South-East European Studies (Bucharest, 1977) pp. 261-70. Paul Rycha suggested setting up a similar seminary for Englishmen, see *Consul* pp. 108-9.

4 See, for example, *Negs.* p. 437-8 Roe to Lord Conway, Sept. 1625.

5 *Negs.* pp. 535-6 Roe to Bethlen Gabor, 25 Jul. 1626.

capacity developed from their efforts to retain good linguists as administrators.

The policy of training English staff as linguists seems to have come to a standstill under Roe. Possibly because of the skill of Timone Dominico, the embassy became complacent about training English administrators in Turkish. Roe did not mention Turkish among his list of useful languages for ambassadors, emphasising instead, that he must speak Latin and Italian 'without which his interpreters will grossly abuse him and his sense will passe so many conduits that it will be corrupted.'¹ Nevertheless, although formal Turkish administrative training waned, the interdependence of merchant community and embassy enabled men like Modyford to learn the language through trade and then graduate to serve in the embassy. This meant that even after the troublesome residence of Sackville Crow, when attention to administrative matters declined, the embassy could still muster able linguists among its staff.²

The combined force of English and local staff was needed to operate the sophisticated and rapidly expanding chancery. The specialisation of personnel at the embassy reflected the growing burden of diplomatic business at the Porte. They had to respond to the demands of the English authorities, and the administrative needs of the English community at the Porte, as well as providing a competent service for the ambassador in his negotiations with the Porte. This balancing act was only possible through the professionalism of personnel and the structure of the embassy.

1 PRO SP97/10 f. 257 Roe to Dr. Donne, 4 May 1625.

2 This practice continued even after 1661. Sonia Anderson: 'Paul Rycaut and his Journey from Constantinople to Vienna 1665-1666' Revue Etudes Sud-Est Européen. XI (1973) pp. 251-73, 253-5 notes that Paul Rycaut, in his capacity as Ambassador Winchelsea's secretary, learnt and continued to improve his Turkish and took over the work of the unreliable *dragoman* Georgio Draperiis. In the long term, the shift from self reliance to dependence on loyal local servants was to cause problems for the embassy. This was particularly the case when Crown control increased, and the embassy was brought into the orbit of the newly created foreign office in 1782. Then the personnel of the merchant community and the embassy diverged and left the embassy with the problems of a local team of translators. These were only resolved in the nineteenth century, once again with the introduction of a language training programme for English staff.

CHAPTER IV. CHANCERY PRACTICE AT THE ENGLISH EMBASSY

An effective administrative office was vital to the success of English ambassadors in their daily business at the Porte. Communications with the authorities in England were difficult and unreliable, so ambassadors needed to be able to determine and execute policy without continually referring to their superiors in England. They were also required to report their decisions and any new political or strategic developments to the Secretary of State, while the Company requested regular reports on trading conditions and the treatment of the English merchant community. The work of compiling and drafting reports which were supposed to help Crown and Company assess policy direction was one of the major tasks of the embassy.

Problems and Methods of Communication

The main administrative problem for ambassadors was correspondence with England. Ambassadors were able to handle commercial matters independently, realising that the Company also received reports from merchants. On the wider issues of diplomacy, however, they needed reassurance that they had acted correctly. Reports frequently took the form of narrations and explanations for actions taken in the absence of instruction from the English authorities.

The apparent lack of policy direction from England was a cause of concern for successive ambassadors, most notably Roe (1622-28), who protested:

'I have travelled farre enough but never had such cause to beleeeve there is a place where the sunne shines not, as heere, for though I am still in the world, I live as I were not concerned, or that this place is not worth the consideration, soe little advise I have or any instruction in these great changes.'¹

This picture of neglect by the Crown authorities is not representative of actual Crown concern in this period. Elizabeth I had displayed a keen interest in the activities of both Harborne (1583-88) and Barton (1588-97). Even James I, who disliked direct relations with the Muslim sultan, sought to direct English policy on the Poles at the Porte and later on the issue of

¹ PRO SP97/9 f. 17 Roe to Dudley Carleton, 25 Jan. 1622/3.

Transylvania. Charles I continued to involve himself in the latter issue, although there was a hiatus in diplomatic policy during the English Civil War. The role of the Crown in directing policy was developed in the mid-1650s under the Protectorate, when Cromwell attempted to control his ambassador's actions with more frequent and detailed commands from England.

Nevertheless, from the perspective of ambassadors at the Porte, the situation seemed very different. Even normal despatches from England took at least three months by ship, depending on the season.¹ Although this was a marginally more secure route than land routes, in winter it was restricted by severe weather conditions. Land routes were slightly faster, but letters were often intercepted or tampered with en route.²

The main problem was that mail was slow to pass through Venice which was responsible for post between Constantinople and Europe. Venetian control was a matter of convenience for ambassadors, as Venetian ships were the most frequent visitors to the Porte but all diplomatic dispatches had to be forwarded by the bailo.

Eyre (1620-22) had been particularly wary of this method and voiced concern that, although the post left Constantinople every fifteen days, he was not certain that the route was secure.³ His fears proved well-founded in Roe's residence when Secretary Calvert had to make official representations to the Venetian ambassador in England over the state of packages delivered from Constantinople via Venice. They had not only been delayed but

'there cutt and mangled most disgracefully by such long incisions made in the sides of the pacquettes, as that all the looser unsealed papers within those pacquetts may bee easily taken forth and read.'⁴

Roe was certain that papers were removed in the same way in dispatches from England and noted that packets of English diplomatic business were delivered two posts later than merchant

1 Horniker: 'Anglo-Turkish Relations' p. 312

2 Pindar suggested that it took less than five weeks for letters to travel between Constantinople and Venice and that letters were usually sent overland. See PRO SP97/7 f. 9 Pindar to Carleton, 23 May 1612; f. 12 Ibid to Ibid, 2 Jun. 1612.

3 PRO SP97/8 f. 7 Eyre to Secretary of State, 29 Jan. 1620/21; f. 11 Eyre to Calvert, 11 Feb. 1620/21.

4 Negs. pp. 160-1 Sir George Calvert to Roe, 6 Jun. 1623.

correspondence.¹

Attempts were made to stop the interception of post and the seepage of intelligence. In July 1626, the Company agent at Venice advised Roe that the route had been secured again by changing the seal and hand of the English cover. Roe continued to suspect that dispatches suffered interference.² He complained that whenever he was involved in an important diplomatic matter, the Venetians opened or detained any English letters, keeping them until they discovered what Roe was doing. The problem was exacerbated when the bailo instituted a delivery order, posting his reports before those of any other ambassador.³

Although Venice was an obvious suspect as all dispatches were funnelled through it, the rise in postal interference was a corollary of the developing role of the English in the diplomatic affairs of the Porte. Although English commerce in the Levant was also threatening Venetian trade at this time, merchants' correspondence was not similarly affected. Indeed, Venice was not the only point of intervention for dispatches from the English embassy.

The Ottoman authorities were wary of all diplomatic dispatches from the Porte and made sporadic attempts to restrict correspondence between embassies and their home authorities. During Pindar's residence (1612-20), the Grand Vizier Nasuh Paşa, complained about the intelligence reports on the Ottoman state sent by ambassadors, and regularly intercepted letters. He also gave orders that all correspondence sent by sea would be stopped and only purely business letters would be forwarded. The Venetian, French and English ambassadors argued that this was an abuse of their privileges but there was little they could do to prevent the searches.⁴ The Vizier's action suggests that ambassadors had attempted to circumvent interceptions by sending dispatches with merchant correspondence.

1 Negs. pp. 174-5 Roe to Calvert, 24 Aug. 1623.

2 PRO SP97/10 f. 274 Roe to Wake, 25 May 1625; Negs. pp. 525-6 Wilkinson to Roe, 13 Jul. 1626; 622-3 Wake to Roe, 2 Mar. 1626/7.

3 PRO SP97/8 f. 246 Roe to Calvert, 7 Sept. 1622; SP97/9 f. 194 Roe to Conway, 20/30 Sept. 1623.

4 B.L. Stowe MSS. 173 f. 180 Pinder to Carleton, 14 Oct. 1612; CSPV 1610-13 p. 437 no. 670 Cristoforo Valier in Constantinople to Doge and Senate, 25 Oct. 1612.

Ottoman suspicion that home dispatches from foreign ambassadors were detrimental to their interests persisted. Roe had a packet of his letters presented to the *Kaymakam* by a zealous officer who was sure that they contained intelligence about the Cossacks. That the letters were then read in open divan alarmed Roe, who took steps to conceal important information by cypher in future correspondence.¹ During Bendish's residence (1647-60), the problem was especially pressing. The Ottoman-Venetian war made it impossible to send correspondence under Venetian cover, and all foreign correspondence from the Porte was suspected of being pro-Venetian intelligence. As Bendish pointed out, 'the warrs have rendered this place very obnoxious to so many obstructions that very rarely any promising safe conveyance doth present.'² These interceptions and delays meant that letters which did arrive failed to do so with the regularity necessary for policy planning.

Such interference with the post made it difficult for the Crown to give full instructions to its ambassador at the Porte. As Francis Walsingham explained to Harborne in June 1587, he could not advise a course of action because none of the relevant documents, letters or their copies had arrived.³ Successive ambassadors were to suffer from similar problems.

In June 1626, Roe noted that he had sent twenty five letters to Conway, the Secretary of State, and never received an answer. In fact, Conway had sent several explicit sets of instructions. The first had enclosed the terms of the Hague Treaty, its text and various ratifications and was sent in November 1625; further details were sent in March 1626. Neither arrived at the Porte. When he finally realised that they had miscarried, Conway sent full instructions in April 1626, which Roe did not receive until the middle of July. This time the letters were sent via Paris, which Roe did not consider secure, warning that there 'they might fall under envious covers, as well into enemyes hands.'⁴ Using the Paris route had been an

1 *Negs.* pp. 264-5 Roe to Sir George Calvert, 25 Jul. 1624.

2 Bodl. Rawl. MSS. A 52 Bendish to Cromwell, 7 Jul. 1656.

3 Letter deciphered by Conyer Read: *Mr Secretary Walsingham* (Oxford, 1925), III pp. 329-332, Francis Walsingham to Harborne, 24 Jun. 1587.

4 For Roe's crisis of instructions, see *Negs.* pp. 461-3; 492-3; 501-505; 526-30.

attempt at finding an alternative secure route to overcome the problems which the English were experiencing with Venice. The lack of fully secure postal routes forced ambassadors to adapt their methods of delivery in an attempt to avoid interception by the various authorities interested in English business at the Porte.

The main reason for the interception of English post was the good quality of English intelligence at the Porte. Roe was well aware of the problem, noting that despatches sent after any meeting with viziers had gone astray.¹ The quality of intelligence from the Porte itself improved as the English position grew stronger, and the frequency of interference in despatches rose correspondingly.

One way to overcome this problem was to send despatches by special messengers, usually members of the embassy staff or relatives of the ambassador. The embassy could not often spare a member of staff, unless a dispatch required extra security or was extremely urgent. Embassy personnel carried official letters to the Crown from the sultan, such as those sent with the member of Barton's staff who accompanied Fynes Moryson on his journey home in February 1596/7.² Embassy staff were also sent to England with urgent despatches; Paul Pindar, as Lello's secretary, was sent to report that conditions for the English at the Porte had deteriorated and that Lello (1606-12) was making no progress in negotiations.

Ambassadors' relatives carried a wider range of correspondence, taking anything which seemed important at their time of departure. Indeed, the content of despatches was not necessarily urgent, since an ambassador's intention was to introduce his relative to key English public figures. Although Roe sent his cousin Robert Roe with the Grand Vizier's letter to the Duke of Buckingham, his main intention was to make Buckingham take notice of his relative.³ Nevertheless, although the content of reports sent in this way was not always high level intelligence, the irregular service which they performed did allow letters to reach England when general mail was not getting through.

1 PRO SP97/9 f. 29 Roe to Lord Carew [/Carleton] 10 Feb. 1622/3.

2 Moryson: *Itinerary*, II p. 102.

3 PRO SP97/8 f. 154-7 Roe to Buckingham, 28 Apr. 1622.

Another attempt to safeguard letters was the use of cyphers by ambassadors. The simplicity of these suggests that they were mainly aimed at foiling Ottoman interceptors rather than their Western counterparts. Roe confirmed this in a letter to Dudley Carleton when, giving Carleton a new cipher, he noted:

'the character I used with your Lordship, beeing made only to serve against the losse of my letters in this cuntry, where any disguise is sufficient, beeing too easy to passe through Christendome, where posts are now daily intercepted.'¹

More sophisticated cyphers, like that for Carleton, were only used when interference was particularly rife, as in the period of heavy English involvement in Ottoman-Transylvanian relations in the 1620s. Enciphered letters were drafted in full in the normal way and then rewritten with the enciphered elements. One deciphered copy was kept in the embassy archive, but others were also sent by routes considered more secure. The use of cyphers suggests that, as English involvement in diplomacy at the Porte grew, ambassadors considered their work more sensitive to scrutiny.

Even with these safeguards, a high percentage of letters went astray or were unusually slow in delivery during this period. To counteract this, the embassy administration implemented written formulas in all letters, designed to limit the damage done by interceptions. From the time of Barton's residence, the practice was adopted of noting dates of correspondence sent from the Porte and of recent arrivals of dispatches from England at the beginning of reports. This alerted the English authorities to any missing letters.

Likewise, reports were prefaced with summaries of the events described in recent correspondence. This ensured that even if one letter was intercepted, the next carried a clear outline of updated events to include present policy. Together with the convention of sending multiple copies on a variety of routes, these measures ensured that the English authorities were still able to keep abreast of their ambassadors' activities at the Porte.

Correspondence Between the Embassy and England

The collation of suitable information and the drafting of reports was a complex process

¹ PRO SP97/11 f. 49 Roe to Carleton, 29 Jul. 1625.

involving consultation between the ambassador and several of his administrative staff. It is possible to piece together this process through an exploration of the large collection of ambassadorial letters which survive. Although those remaining are the copies sent to ministers, the drafts and additional copies enclosed reveal the mechanics of the embassy archive.

The English embassy at Constantinople developed an organised archive of letters sent to England and of documents connected with Porte business. This provided an important resource for successive ambassadors, who used reports as background for their assessments of the state of the Ottoman Empire and who needed official documents as proof of precedents. The dependence of the Ambassador on this archive was highlighted shortly after Bendish took up his residence in 1648. He reported being hindered in his attempts to solve merchant quarrels because the books of the Chancellery, 'which all such evidences, presidents and other instruments as have been collecting ever since Sir Paul Pindar's tyme' had been removed in the confusion at the end of Crow's residence.¹

This embassy archive was more sophisticated than state registers in England. The state collected related material together at Whitehall in the early seventeenth century. Papers were sorted into countries and chronological order, with documents pertaining to 'Turkey, Barbary and the Indies' grouped together. These included:

'one booke of letters from the Ambassadors that were in Queen Elizabeth's tyme; as also diverse books and papers from Sir Paul Pindar and others, as Sir Thomas Glover; with one cubbord of letters from the Grand Signor'

as well as packets of letters concerning Ottoman affairs.² However, out-going letters were not kept so meticulously and instructions lost in transit could not be duplicated. This office was more a repository than a working reference library.

In contrast, the English embassy attempted to retain all documentation. After gathering raw intelligence from various sources, short reports were written and summarised. These

1 B.L. Add. MSS. 15750 ff. 32-3 Bendish to Charles I 1647/48. The documents were evidently not returned because Winchelsea continued to complain about their loss, see HMC 71 Finch I p. 421 Winchelsea to [cousin] Heneage Finch, 12/22 Jun. 1666.

2 B.L. Harl. MSS. 1579 f. 83-85 Generall Heads of Things in the Office of his Majesty's Paper and Records for Business of State and Counsell at Whitehall, esp. f. 84a Turkey, Barbary and the Indies.

provided abstracts which were often enclosed with final reports summaries.¹ The ambassador made a rough draft by collating the shorter reports and then the full length report was copied neatly several times. This practice was part of a wider Crown policy of establishing uniformity in diplomatic reports from all English embassies.²

One copy, together with any miscellaneous documents or reports relating to it, was kept in the embassy archive. In cases involving both Company and Crown interests, such as the Algiers piracy negotiations of the early 1620s, the relevant documents were preserved in both the embassy archive and in the Company records.³

Although personal touches of each ambassador are preserved in these reports, the form and style vary little. The style was generally discursive rather than simple narration. This made points of policy stand out more clearly but lacked the atmosphere of Venetian reports, which were almost verbatim accounts of meetings and negotiations. Such uniformity of reports also strengthens the argument that the embassy provided a continuity of chancery practice.

Ambassadorial Reports

Ambassadors wrote several different types of reports for the authorities in England, although all followed the production procedure outlined above. The longest reports which an ambassador was expected to dispatch were the 'Relations' of the Ottoman Empire, written at the beginning and end of his residence. These were a series of detailed observations about political, military and social conditions in the Ottoman Empire, paying particular attention to stability at the Porte.

The first relation was partly an exercise in diplomatic acclimatization, compelling an ambassador to observe and inform himself about the present situation and predict potential

1 See, for example, PRO SP97/9 f. 104-110 Abstracts from Roe's residence in Constantinople.

2 This form continued to be used when the embassy fell under the umbrella of the Foreign Office in 1782.

3 These documents survive in the Company Court records, PRO SP105/102 ff. 82-94, while the original English translations of letters from the *Kapudan Paşa* are found in PRO SP97/9 ff. 60-64.

developments. The inclusion of detailed information about the chief officers of state, their influence and alignments, as well as troop statistics and movements shows that ambassadors were expected to have a full grasp of the situation from the start. It also ensured that the domestic authorities were fully apprised of any developments in Ottoman policy during the transition period when one ambassador handed over to his successor. The accuracy and detail of the information depended more on the ability of the embassy staff than on the ambassador himself and in this respect the initial relation was a test of the efficiency of the entire embassy machine.

The relation written at the end of an ambassador's residence served a different function. Although it also provided information for the English authorities, it was a wider over-view of events and developments during the residence. It provided background information for the new ambassador, showed him the main thrust of policy and also helped him assess its long term prospects. It acted as a training document to demonstrate possible courses of action and introduce the ambassador to the main influences on policy. It aimed to ensure continuity of policy but also to illustrate the need for a constant adaptation of action.

These were the two main reports required of an ambassador but, in addition, he was expected to send regular progress reports to the Secretary of State. The frequency of such reports varied according to the ambassador and the situation at the Porte. Roe, for example often sent summaries of his reports to the King, possibly to maintain a high profile at Court.¹ The reports themselves varied in purpose. The most common type was a general summary of current issues and events at the Porte, in a newsletter. Its function was to provide low-level intelligence for the English authorities. Such reports were supported by more detailed reports on matters of particular concern to the Crown.

There were two varieties in this class: the first provided a summary of particular negotiations, often between the Porte and a power other than England, including intelligence or documents pertaining to the issue. One such example is an undated letter from Roe to

¹ See, for example, *Negs.* pp. 151-3 Roe to King, 20 May 1623. Bendish imitated this in his regular briefings to Cromwell.

Secretary Calvert, written soon after Roe's arrival at the Porte. In it, he described a meeting between himself and the Transylvanian agent, where the latter outlined Bethlen Gabor's plan for an alliance with the Porte to secure himself against Habsburg incursions. Roe then reported a meeting with the Grand Vizier, Lefkeli-Mustafa Paşa, where he was questioned about Gabor's agents by the Vizier and *Reisülkütab*. He went on to outline another clandestine meeting with the Vizier and *Reisülkütab*, where he was informed of the contents of Gabor's official letter to the Porte, which he reproduced in his letter.¹ This is clearly of greater importance as intelligence than the general newsletters.

The second form of detailed report was one which outlined a particular situation, directly involving the English, as a preamble to asking for the Crown to make formal representations on the matter to the Porte. Roe reported the problem of Venetian contravention of the regulations governing Strangers Consulage in this way: giving a background to the dispute, an outline of his policy and general and specific reasons for England's stance, before petitioning the Council for action. Bendish described the problems that Henry Hide was causing in his usurpation attempt and asked for official support in the same way.² Such letters were designed to provide a full picture of the issue to enable action to be taken as soon as possible.

Finally, ambassadors were expected to correspond with other English resident embassies and agencies throughout Europe. English ambassadors in Venice and the Hague acted as the sorting and distribution centre for intelligence from all English residences, and dispatches to them constituted a considerable quantity of work. Indeed, even Roe who was an efficient administrator, had to neglect his private correspondence to keep up with regular official dispatches.³

Ambassadors were required to communicate with the English authorities to foster a

1 *Negs.* pp. 80-9 Roe to Secretary Calvert, 7 Sept. 1622

2 See *Negs.* pp. 446-8 Roe to King's Council, 2/12 Nov. 1625; PRO SP97/17 f. 35 Bendish to Council of State, 6 Aug. 1650.

3 PRO SP97/9 f. 8 Roe to Sir John Finet, 10/20 Jan. 1622/3.

sense of accountability within the embassy and to provide a wide range of intelligence which could influence English policy decisions beyond the Porte. However, although such reports took time to compile, they were not the main priority for administrative staff of the embassy. A more pressing concern was the work involved in preparing and presenting letters and petitions to the Porte.

The English Embassy And Bureaucracy At The Porte

The embassy organised documents necessary to begin negotiations and this was a complicated process as the Porte used a system of written petitions for all negotiations and complaints from ambassadors. Petition systems had been the practice of all medieval Muslim states as an important channel of justice. In the early Ottoman period, the custom of presenting petitions to the sultan when he made public appearances on horseback had developed as a means of appealing directly to the sultan for justice, using him as a final court of appeal. However, by the late sixteenth century, with the greater physical seclusion of the sultan from both political and military matters, the system had been formalised into a bureaucratic device of the imperial Chancery, although petitions could still be presented to the sultan when he appeared in public.¹ Foreign ambassadors, who considered that their privileges placed them outside local civil law, used this system as their regular channel of complaint.

In the seventeenth century, petitions were more usually presented through supportive Paşas to the Grand Vizier and although the eventual response was endorsed by the sultan, petitions were often relegated to Chancery records, without ever reaching him.² Success depended greatly on the political climate of the day and the energy of an ambassador in pursuing petitions through political contacts in the state hierarchy. There was one exception

¹ See Hakluyt VI p. 96. Thomas Sherley suggests that this was still the case in Lello's residence in Sherley: Discourse p. 2.

² The practice of delegating petitions to a deputy was a feature of the Fatimid and Mamluk Chanceries which provided a model for later Ottoman practice. See S.M. Stern: 'Three Petitions from the Fatimid Period' Oriens 15 (1962) pp. 172-209; 'Petitions from the Mamluk Period' BSOAS 29 (1966) pp. 233-76.

to this: letters from the English Crown were presented to the sultan at an audience, although in practice the Grand Vizier actually supervised the response to them. Direct presentation to the sultan gave Crown letters a better chance of surviving the labyrinthine paths through the Ottoman chancery.¹

The first task of administrators at the beginning of an ambassador's residence was to deal with letters from the English Crown. They had to be rapidly translated into the Ottoman language and form before formal presentation to the sultan at the ambassador's first audience. Even close sealed letters were checked by the embassy.² Winchilsea (1660-69) advised the secretary of state in June 1663 that he had changed the sultan's name from Ibrahim to Mehmet on a letter and resealed it with no visible alteration.³

That these official letters were treated as petitions by the Ottoman authorities, was played down by the English embassy. They recognised that Crown letters were vital components in their diplomatic armoury and did not want the English Crown to stop endorsing cases because it felt it beneath its dignity to do so. The English were justified in considering that Crown letters had greater force than ordinary representations. Case studies show that both Crown letters and ambassadorial petitions received more attention than ordinary petitions and were more likely to succeed although the decision was made and presented in the customary way.

English Crown Correspondence With The Porte

1 For the development of the Ottoman Chancery, see Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı: Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilâtı (Ankara, 1945), pp. 235-39, 279-96; Ibid: Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilâtı (Ankara, 1948); Uriel Heyd: Ottoman Documents on Palestine, 1552-1615 (Clarendon, Oxford, 1960); D.A. Howard: 'The Historical Development of the Ottoman Imperial Registry (Defter-i Hakanî)' Archivum Ottomanicum II (1986) pp. 213-30. It is difficult to make comparisons with the English chancery and its administration because the two systems are so different but for the development of the English system, see Florence M.G. Evans: Principal Secretary of State (Manchester, 1923); G.R. Elton: Tudor Revolution in Government (Cambridge, 1953) and Aylmer: King's Servants and State's Servants.

2 On the two forms of sealed letters, see Aylmer: King's Servants p. 16 n. 2.

3 HMC 71 Finch I p. 261 Winchilsea to Secretary Henry Bennett, 9 Jun. 1663. Bennett's apology for this slip is in Ibid p. 275, 7 Sept. 1663.

Crown letters to the Porte came in three categories. The first type was a letter of protocol, either introducing or recalling an ambassador. Of standard form, it began with a salutation to the sultan and then outlined the change in ambassadors. It concluded with general hopes for continuing amity between the two nations and for rapid renewal of the capitulations. This was the easiest form for the embassy administration to translate, because there was little variation in its content.

The second category of Crown letters was more complicated to translate and needed more subtle handling. This was the detailed letter of grievance, such as that sent by Charles I over breaches in the capitulations.¹ Such letters were often motivated by pressure from the Company or the ambassador, and generally dealt with perceived abuses of privilege. James I widened the scope of these letters to encompass petitions made to him by foreign representatives, sending a letter to the sultan protesting at the mistreatment of the Venetians in a matter of galley compensation following diplomatic pressure from their ambassador in England.²

He also took up the case of Poland, which the Ottoman authorities were planning to invade. The Venetian bailo's description of the translation process of this letter reveals that it was a diplomatic skill in itself. He noted that James had asked the Porte to heed his letter as they had done that of Elizabeth I and stop their 'similar unreasonable design.' He continued:

'They hesitated about translating the word unreasonable into Turkish but the ambassador [Eyre], who is a very determined man, said he would have it stand as it was in the king's letter, though ultimately he agreed to moderate those words and say they speak of a design to make war although the Poles have not inflicted any harm on the Porte.'³

The experience of the embassy staff came into its own on these occasions and

1 Contents of Charles I's letter inferred from Negs. pp. 558-62 Roe to Conway, 22 Sept. 1626; 597-99 Roe to Conway, 18 Jan. 1626/7.

2 For James I's letter, see CSPV 1619-21 p. 255 no. 357 James to Sultan Osman, 2 May 1620; B.L. Harl. MSS. 1580 ff. 372-3a Eyre to Duke of Buckingham, 30 Jul. 1620.

3 CSPV 1619-21 p. 313 no. 436 Almorò Nani, Venetian ambassador in Constantinople to Doge and Senate, 14 Jul. 1620.

considerable rephrasing of demands was needed to render the Crown letter into an effective but acceptable petition to the Porte. This task became more important as English interests at the Porte spread to cover politically sensitive topics such as relations between the Ottoman Empire and Transylvania.

The third type of Crown letter was similar in form to the petitions described above. It too outlined a particular case but was an intercession by the King in a petition brought by one or more subjects. The content was usually connected with piracy in the Mediterranean, either seeking release of particular named prisoners or compensation of goods and vessels. In the case of Thomas Sherley, who was imprisoned in Constantinople, his father had petitioned the king and obtained letters asking for his son's release. When these were lost, he again petitioned the king and received a second letter.¹ The involvement of the king in individual petitions illustrates that the English regarded official Crown letters as the most effective form of action. In the Sherley case, the ambassador, Henry Lello, voiced this when he advised the sultan and his ministers:

'to take good notice of his Majestie's letters, which weare not for so small matter to be lightly regarded, the same being from a potent and great Prince.'

2

However, even with the advantage of being presented to the sultan 'by the Vizier, and his to his owne [sultan's] hands', Crown letters were still processed slowly.³ It took the Grand Vizier three months to consider Charles I's letter dealing with specific breaches in the capitulations. Nevertheless, the outcome was favourable, with the Porte promising redress of grievances.⁴ Letters from the Crown were successful because the Porte needed to maintain useful allies, among which, the English featured prominently.

1 A.D. Alderson: 'Sir Thomas Sherley's Piratical Expedition to the Aegean and his Imprisonment in Constantinople' *Oriens* 9 (1940) pp. 1-40, p. 13. See below, p. 219 ff.

2 PRO SP97/5 f. 44 Lello to Salisbury, 19 Dec. 1605.

3 *Negs.* pp. 558-62 Roe to Conway, 22 Sept. 1626.

4 For Charles' petition, see PRO SP104/167 Secretary Conway to Roe, 29 May 1626; *Negs.* pp. 558-62 Roe to Conway, 22 Sept. 1626. For the Ottoman response, see Naima: tr. Danişman, II p. 962 İngiliz Elçisinin Gelisi.

Personal petitions, even when taken up by the Crown, were regarded as less important in fostering diplomatic good-will. The Porte realised that the Crown's interest in such cases was limited by the amount of pressure petitioners could afford to apply. It was up to the English ambassador and his administrators at the Porte to see that pressure for action was maintained even when the Crown's interest had waned. For the same reason, other petitions had to be correctly formulated and accurately translated into Ottoman to ensure that no ambiguities remained to provide the Porte with loop-holes. Documents also had to provide a sense of urgency to sustain interest at the Porte Chancery.

Embassy Use of the King's Seal

From at least the reign of James I, the embassy made use of a seal inscribed with 'King James's armes' for certain documents.¹ It is possible that this was a deputed Great Seal, designed to deal with routine business.² It was certainly handed on from one ambassador to the next in the manner of a deputed seal. Eyre was commanded to deliver the seal to the agent Chapman in his letter of revocation, while Sackville Crow (1639-47) noted that it 'was left with me by Sir Peter Wych, used by him and his predecessors.'³ It is understandable that the embassy should be given such a seal to aid the smooth administration of diplomacy at the Porte and overcome the problems caused by distance from England and the insecurity of communications.

Despite these similarities with a deputed seal, other evidence makes the case less clear. It was never described as a deputed seal or even a Great Seal. On the only occasion when it

1 PRO SP97/16 f. 295 Crow to Secretary of State, 3 Oct. 1640

2 I am indebted to Pierre Chaplais for his assistance on this complex issue. For the function and precedent of deputed great seals, see Hilary Jenkinson: 'The Great Seal of England: Deputed or Departmental Seals' *Archaeologia* LXXXV (1936) pp. 293-338; Ibid: Guide to Seals in the Public Records Office (London, 1954) and Pierre Chaplais: Essays in Medieval Diplomacy and Administration (London, 1981) Chap. VIII pp. 61-96 esp. pp. 62-4.

3 PRO SP97/8 f. 43 Eyre's Letter of recall, 9 Jul. 1621; SP97/16 f. 295 Crow to Secretary of State, 3 Oct 1640

was mentioned by a title, Eyre called it 'the privy signett.'¹ In appearance too, there are discrepancies from usual deputed seals. Sackville Crow's description of the seal only mentions the armorial crest of James I.² Deputed seals were normally double-sided and although they often bore the monarch's arms on one side, they usually bore his portrait on the other.³

Despite these differences, the seal appears to have had authority. The Crown authorities treated the seal as official in James I's reign since Eyre had handed on the seal to Chapman at their request.⁴ When the use of the seal was formally established after the restoration, Winchilsea was also instructed by the king to hand on the seal 'with the king's arms' to his successor.⁵ The continued use of James' seal in Charles I's reign suggests either that the Crown had not officially sanctioned its use or that the old seal continued to function successfully. Sackville Crow was concerned about its authority and argued 'I should not have presumed to have used it without warrant.'⁶ His lack of authorization might indicate that the English authorities took the ambassador's right to use the seal for granted. Indeed, the Crown itself had endorsed Crow with the authority to act without explicit command from England:

'considering the distance of that place where you are to reside wee think not fitt allwaies to oblige you to attend new directions from hence in matters where so long a delay may prejudice ther our honor or important service, but in such cases wee shall rely upon your faith and judgement, to take the opportunities when they shall be offered, not doubting you will be carefull not to engage yourselfe in anything that may be inconvenient.'⁷

Bendish brought a more specific warrant and a new seal to the Porte, but his warrant was more to safeguard his own position whatever future changes in English politics might result. He was given express permission by Charles I, imprisoned by Parliament in Holdenby,

1 PRO SP97/8 f. 93 Eyre to Lords of Council, 12 Dec. 1621

2 PRO SP97/8 f. 93 Eyre to Lords of Council, 12 Dec. 1621; SP97/16 f. 295 Crow to Secretary of State, 3 Oct. 1640

3 See Jenkinson: Archaeologia p. 297; Chaplais: Diplomacy p. 63.

4 PRO SP97/8 f. 43 Eyre's Letter of Recall

5 HMC 71 Finch I p. 511 Charles II to Winchilsea, 3 Aug. 1668.

6 PRO SP97/16 f. 295 Crow to Secretary of State, 3 Oct. 1640

7 B.L. Egerton MSS. 2541 ff. 204-5 Charles I's Instructions to Sackville Crow, 14 Jul. 1638.

to:

'take and carrye with him such seale or seales as the parliament hath given him for his confirmaccon, and further assurance, or establishment of that his imployment; and that itt shalbee lawfull for him to make such use of itt, as hee shall thinke fitt, and may conduce to the advantage of himselfe, and the Turkye Companie and for his soe doing this our warrant shalbee sufficient to preserve him...his heires, and executors, from the displeasure of us our heires and successors, or any proceeding whatsoever against them.'¹

This suggests that even if the seal was not a deputed Great Seal, it was designed to facilitate business at the Porte.

Just how the seal was used is not entirely clear. The purpose of a deputed seal was to allow a royal representative to issue letters and writs in the King's name. The ambassador in Constantinople could not use the seal in this manner for routine business without risk of diminishing the power of Crown letters. Moreover, it is improbable that the Porte would accept ordinary letters bearing the embassy seal as having the force of a Crown letter. The evidence suggests that the seal was used sparingly, either to mark a document as a matter of state and therefore worthy of urgent attention, or more likely, to forge a letter from the king. According to Crow, it was not used to support commercial cases, where the ambassador's authority 'backed with the authority of his majesty's great seale' was sufficient. It was intended for urgent diplomatic cases 'if there had bein occasion, as indeed there is none here (though I was made to beleieve there would be)' where a genuine Crown letter would have taken too long to organise.²

The significance of the embassy seal is evident in Crow's struggle to prevent a merchant candidate, John Lancelot, from usurping him. The ambassador noted that when he was deposed by Lancelot, he took steps to regain his position by using the seal. The passage describing this action suggests that his use of the seal was not simply to demonstrate his authority as rightful ambassador, but rather to forge a Crown letter. The merchants certainly suspected that Crow had forged a letter purporting to come from Charles I, confirming him as ambassador. They argued that there were major discrepancies in form and style in this

1 ERO D/DHf O8 Charles I's Warrant to Bendish, 29 Mar. 1647

2 PRO SP97/16 f. 295 Crow to Secretary of State, 3 Oct. 1640

letter.¹ Crow argued that the seal had been used in this way by his predecessors

'in occasions of like difficultie (when time or meanes served nott for his Majesties due information and signification of his further pleasure.)'²

His use of the seal evidently succeeded, as Crow was rapidly restored by force of the sultan's *Hatt-i Şerif* (Imperial decree), having circumvented the slower bureaucratic process of routine petitions.

The situation was clarified on Bendish's return from the Porte. He evidently apprised his successor Winchilsea of the existence of the seal but did not pass it on to him. Winchilsea wrote to Secretary Edward Nicholas, noting

'I find by Sir Thomas Bendysh and all the records of theis place, that it was his majestie's custome to bestowe alwayes... a seale also of the royall armes, under which all commissions and publicke instructions were passed.'³

Winchilsea enclosed a copy of Bendish's warrant from Charles I to establish the precedent. Secretary Nicholas was not aware of the seal and had to seek evidence of its authenticity, noting that from the warrant it appeared that Bendish should have passed the seal on to Winchilsea.⁴ He admitted that he did not know what the seal should look like. He had sought the advice of Crow but he denied all knowledge of it and so was waiting for Bendish to clarify matters. Crow's denial, despite his earlier detailed description of the seal, suggests that he was still ashamed of using the seal without formal warrant.

Bendish evidently convinced Nicholas of the authority and purpose of the seal. Nicholas promised to send Winchilsea the 'king's seal' and gave him instructions to use it 'in such extraordinary occasions as former ambassadors in that place were wont to do, and not on

1 CSPV 1643-47 pp. 291-2 no. 455 Giovanni Soranzo, Venetian Bailo at Constantinople to Doge and Senate, 5 Dec. 1646.

2 B.L. Egerton MSS. 2533 ff. 429-32 Sackville Crow to Secretary, 10 Sept. 1647. It is possible that the copy of a draft letter from Charles I to the Sultan of 24 Nov. 1646, contained in B.L. Add. MSS. 15,856 f. 17, concerning reparations to his Majesty's Ambassador there, is the letter which Crow forged.

3 PRO SP97/17 f. 169 Winchilsea to Secretary Nicholas, 1 Mar. 1660/1

4 HMC 71 Finch I p. 133 Edward Nicholas to Winchilsea, 28 Jun. 1661

any ordinary business.’¹ He noted that the bearers would deliver the seal ‘with supporters to it which is more than his majesty’s signet hath’.² Even if the seal did not look like a regular Great Seal, it was clearly used to add sovereign weight to letters where necessary.

The use of such a seal raises questions about the importance the Porte attached to the sealing of documents. That the English could continue to seal letters, albeit rarely, with James I’s arms, even after the Porte had received letters sealed with Charles I’s crest, implies that official letters were not closely scrutinised. This was certainly the case when, in the attempt to oust Crow from the embassy, John Lancelot, though endorsed by Parliament’s seal and not that of the King, was admitted to the Porte.

This highlights the difference in form between English and Ottoman authorisation of royal documents. In Ottoman society, while Grand Viziers possessed a ring-seal as a symbol of their authority as the sultan’s deputy and were known as *sahib-i mühür* (master of the seal), the most important documents of state were marked not with a seal but by the sultan’s *tuğra* (monogram).³ In English chancery practice, however, it was the personal great seal of the monarch which gave a document full sovereign weight and performed the same function as the *tuğra*.⁴

The difference in styles of authentication was a cause of special concern for the English during the English Civil War and its aftermath. They feared that the Porte’s lack of examination of documents would allow an imposter to take up the ambassadorship. This almost proved the case in 1650 when Henry Hide arrived at the Porte, with letters supposedly endorsed by Charles II. The Company accused Hide of counterfeiting the seal, which he had also attempted while Consul of the Morea. As the Company pointed out, at the Ottoman Porte

1 HMC 71 Finch I p. 153 Nicholas to Winchilsea, 12 Sept. 1661

2 HMC 71 Finch I p. 159 Nicholas to Winchilsea, 21 Oct. 1661

3 For the use of seals and the *tuğra*, see I.H. Uzunçarşılı: ‘Tuğra ve Penceler’ Der İslam 5 (1945) pp. 101–57.

4 On the use of royal seals in England, see Henry Churchill Maxwell-Lyte: Historical Notes on the use of the Great Seal of England (London, 1926); J. Otway-Ruthven: The King’s Secretary and the Signet Office in the Fifteenth Century (Cambridge, 1939); Evans: Secretary of State chp. IX.

this allowed him to have 'what commission of that kind he pleased.'¹ Hide was prevented from presenting the letters by Bendish and his usurpation failed, but the English were well aware that the special embassy seal, while a tool to facilitate administration in an embassy so far from direct royal control, could prove a double-edged sword if its purpose was abused and other unofficial seals permitted.

Presentation of Petitions

For more routine documents, the English selected suitable high officials (*paşas*) to process petitions most effectively. While the Grand Vizier oversaw all communications entering the Porte, the English often used other public figures to endorse a petition. In the negotiations to secure an agreement over piracy with Algiers, for example, the English used the *Kapudan Paşa* (High Admiral), Halil Paşa, to further their case, as he held responsibility for the security of Ottoman waters. The English gathered intelligence on potential supporters in the Porte hierarchy through local staff. They could move more inconspicuously around the Porte than the English, who appear to have worn European clothes in Constantinople.² The ambassador consolidated this intelligence by working on potential allies at the Porte, as Roe described:

'I went a little further to open up the eyes of the mufty, the bustangee bassa (*paşa*) and some other great ministers, hoping by some way the truth would enter the King's chamber.'³

Ambassadors aimed to raise the profile of a case through as many channels of communication as were possible.

In their contacts with high officials at the Porte, the English attempted to mirror the policy they had adopted towards local servants. Retaining the loyalty of Porte officials, however, proved far more difficult and expensive than it had with local servants.

1 PRO SP97/16 f.295 Crow to Secretary of State, 3 Oct. 1640; SP97/17 f. 52 Petition of Levant Company to Council of State against Henry Hide.

2 Bodl. MSS. Rawl C 799, Bargrave: Sundry Voyages f. 22 suggests that the English were in daily danger of being mistaken as Venetians and stabbed because they wore 'Westerne habit.'

3 Negs. pp. 452-5 Roe to Conway, 4/14 Nov. 1625.

Firstly, there was the problem that officials were frequently removed from their appointments so that once they had been secured as allies, there was no guarantee that they would be in a position to help at the crucial moment. This was the case in the negotiations for the renewal of English capitulations in 1600-1. Lello had bribed the *Kaymakam*, Halil Paşa, and the *Kapudan Paşa*, Cağal-oğlu, to endorse an article allowing both a reduction of dues on English trade and the privilege of carrying Dutch trade under the English flag. The *Sipahi* revolt of March 1601 cost Halil Paşa his position, and his successor Hafız Ahmed Paşa was not in favour of the changes. Only his downfall and the renewed assistance of Cağal-oğlu allowed Lello to push the articles through.

These fluctuations in the fortunes of selected allies frustrated even the ablest of ambassadors. In May 1623, Roe complained to Lord Arundel, 'the daily mutations of officers give us some frends, some foes, all so full of trouble that I scarce live safely' and argued that 'every pety officer exacts and makes use of his place to gett money.'¹ The serious internal disturbances of the early 1620s made the Porte especially unstable, but Roe was voicing a concern, common to all English ambassadors, that contacts at the Porte were never a guarantee of progress in negotiations.

Another problem was that, as the number of foreign representatives at the Porte rose in the early seventeenth century, so factionalism between pro- and anti-Habsburg states spilled over to Porte officials. Factionalism had already coloured the fortunes of competing resident diplomats at the Porte, as the English were only too aware.² The rising tensions in Central Europe added a political hard edge to the factionalism at the Porte. Gaining support among high-ranking officials was no longer merely a way of making progress in routine negotiations but a method of neutralising hostile policies promoted by enemy legates. This was particularly apparent in Roe's attempts to secure and use contacts against the Spanish envoy's plan for a Hispano-Ottoman peace treaty.³ As English business at the Porte increased, both

1 *Negs.* p. 156 Extract of letter to Lord Arundel, 1/10 May 1623.

2 See above, p. 78 ff.

3 *Negs.* p. 535-6 Roe to Bethlen Gabor, 25 Jul. 1626.

in routine and international negotiations, so the English were more dependent on the often despised contacts at the Porte.

Nevertheless, despite the pessimism and disdain of ambassadors for this method of negotiation, there were successes. Both Harborne and Barton were able to rely on the Imperial tutor, Hoca Efendi Sâdeddin while Roe himself was able to use the *Kaymakam* and Grand Vizier, Gürcü-Mehmed Paşa, as his chief support and source of intelligence, until the latter's assassination in July 1626.¹ As the sultan dropped out of the decision-making process, there were a growing number of key advisers whom the English could cultivate.

Efforts were also made to establish more stable contacts, and approaches were made towards members of the parallel state institution, the *Ulema*. Roe regarded the Ulema as less susceptible to bribes, and in more secure positions. He argued that they changed office by rotation rather than deposition and, in his view, returned to office every three years, which added continuity to the contact. Furthermore, they were not used by any other foreign power and so were less likely to be suspected of factionalism.² Roe's careful consideration of the benefits of using the *Ulema* indicates the lengths to which ambassadors went to retain the support of Porte officials. While they complained about the lack of service they provided, ambassadors knew that they had absolutely no chance of success without some well placed support from within the Porte hierarchy.

One public figure whom the English courted assiduously during the seventeenth century was the *Reisülküttab*, or chief scribe of the Imperial Chancery. Originally, his task had been to act as chief clerk of the Divan but he was, in practice, the Grand Vizier's administrative deputy supervising the Imperial administration. As the palace administration expanded, his position covered correspondence with foreign powers and he became responsible

1 *Negs.* pp. 524-5 Roe to Conway, 5 Jul. 1626.

2 *Negs.* p. 490-1 Roe to Conway, 11/21 Mar. 1625/6. There is no evidence to suggest that Roe's assertions were correct.

for foreign relations.¹ In the first half of the seventeenth century, this role was still at an elementary stage, but attempts by the English to develop a good working relationship with the *Reisülküttab* indicate that he was seen as a key influence in foreign affairs.²

His power lay in his control of the process of formulating Imperial responses. Not only could he support an ally's case, he could actually strengthen the final outcome through the wording of the Imperial response. This was the case in the Capitulations negotiations of 1622, when Roe acknowledged the support of the *Reisülküttab* and gave him a present of 1000 *chequins* 'to pass the new articles which without him could not have bene obteyned.'³ There was a danger that these presents would not always secure the favourable outcome which the English desired, but would be reduced to a convention ensuring that negotiations were concluded. As with all the other officers whom the English used, the ambassador had to personally press his claim, right up to the final drafting of an agreement in the Ottoman chancery.

The methods which successive ambassadors used varied a great deal depending on personality and circumstance, and are best described in the detail of particular negotiations. Nevertheless, the ambassadors used some common tactics which suggest that they were advised on the general conduct of business by the administrative staff at the embassy.

The first such strategy was to feign illness for the first few days after the ceremonial arrival. This device may have developed from the real sickness suffered by some ambassadors after their journey to the Porte, giving ambassadors time to recover their strength for what was often a combative preliminary round of meeting officials and establishing what was embassy policy. Harborne advised Mr. Foster, whom he was sending to Syria as Consul, to act

1 For developments in the role of the *Reisülküttab*, see A. Zajackowski and J. Reychman (trans.) A.S. Ehrenkreutz: *Handbook of Ottoman-Turkish Diplomacy* (The Hague, 1968), pp. 160-64; Thomas Naff: 'Reform and the Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy in the Reign of Selim III 1789-1807' *JAOS* 83 (1963) pp. 295-315, pp. 296-99.

2 By Winchilsea's residence, the *Reisülküttab* was sufficiently important for the English ambassador to correspond with him, asking for a continuation of his favours: see *HMC* 71 Finch I p. 162 Winchilsea to *Reisülküttab*, 24 Oct. 1661.

3 PRO SP105/103 f. 53a Company Court at Constantinople, 18 Apr. 1622; f. 63a Court, 21 Dec. 1622.

in this way.¹ It was used as a way of buying time to acclimatise the ambassador to the political situation at the Porte.

Sackville Crow also feigned illness to prevent his rights of precedence from being eroded.² When he arrived at the Porte, Murad IV had been on the Baghdad campaign, and by the time of his return, several ambassadors, including Crow, were waiting for their official audience of accreditation. The Porte was keen to perform these as rapidly as possible and designated a single day for the audiences of Crow and the Safavid ambassador, an envoy from the Holy Roman Emperor, the new French ambassador (who had not yet arrived), and the Transylvanian and Ragusan envoys.

Crow realised that time pressures would prevent the sultan from an extended audience and was also frustrated to discover that he had been placed behind the Habsburg agent and the French ambassador as well as the Safavid ambassador. Crow recognised that the Porte would give precedence to the Safavids, as an established protocol and because the Porte was preoccupied with the eastern campaign. He suggested that they should be received a day earlier than the others, arguing that as Muslims, they should not be received on the same day as the Western ambassadors. This left only the French and Imperial envoys with whom to contend. It was soon clear that the French ambassador would not reach the Porte in time to be included, so Crow needed only to deal with the Habsburg agent.

It was at this point that he feigned illness to delay the audience while he worked on the *Kaymakam*. Eventually, the Porte ordered the Habsburg envoy to remain at home on the day which Crow received his audience and to wait for an audience another day. In the diplomatic world of the Porte, where an ambassador had to be sure of his position and continually reinforcing his support, sickness was a useful and readily excusable tactic to gain time to plan and execute policy.

Another tactic which ambassadors used to buy time was to claim that they were not

¹ See Edwin Pears: 'The Spanish Armada and the Ottoman Porte' *EHR* 8 (1893) pp. 439-466, p. 444

² PRO SP97/16 f. 231 Crow to Secretary of State, 14 Sept. 1639

briefed to deal with a particular issue and that they needed to correspond with home authorities. This was less successful as Viziers expected ambassadors to have full powers to make decisions at the Porte. In 1612, when the resident ambassadors were desperately trying to buy time to prevent their capitulations being altered, the Grand Vizier, Nasuh Paşa, argued that they should be able to act as he could and only report policy decisions to their sovereigns when they had been executed.¹ Likewise, in December 1651, when Bendish argued that he needed instructions from England before signing a document swearing that the English community would not participate in the Venetian navy, the Ottoman authorities took matters into their own hands.²

If such diplomatic tactics failed, the English ambassadors had the last resort of using threats to achieve success. Both Pindar and Roe warned the Porte that they would remove the English community and trade from the Ottoman Empire if their capitulations were not renewed and observed satisfactorily.³ Bendish took the serious step of bringing a merchant fleet towards the Topkapi Saray in a demonstration of power designed to force the Porte to redress the merchants' grievances and renew the capitulations.⁴

In most cases, the action worked, at least in the short term. The Porte respected England as a useful ally and important trade operator. This was enough to ensure that it did not disregard the basic privileges which maintained the English community at the Porte and the diplomatic goodwill of the English Crown.

The extent of this respect is indicated in the level of success which the English achieved at the Porte. Admittedly, problems for the merchants continued, as the Porte interpreted abuses of the Capitulations differently from Western ambassadors, but a favourable outcome could still be reached.

1 For the Vizier's comments, see CSPV 1610-13 pp. 465-7 no. 724 Cristoforo Valier, Venetian ambassador in Constantinople, to Doge and Senate, 23 Dec. 1612. For further details on this dispute, see below, p. 143 ff.

2 For the details of this case, see below, p. 231.

3 Negs. pp. 14-15 Roe to Calvert, 10/20 Jan. 1621.

4 B.L. Add. MSS. 15,750 ff. 32-3 Bendish to King, undated [circa Dec. 1647/8].

Imperial Correspondence With The English Crown

The correspondence which the Ottoman sultan and Grand Vizier conducted with the English Crown reflected this good working relationship. The commonest form was the official notification of the successful conclusion of negotiations, translated into English at the embassy. Much work has been done on Ottoman letters sent to the English Crown in this period and this is not the place for a detailed assessment of their form.¹ Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that the style of Ottoman diplomatic correspondence was very different from its English counterpart, and that these contrasts had to be handled carefully by the English embassy administration to avoid causing unnecessary offence to the Crown. The Crown tried to adapt to the convention of elaborate titles in its correspondence with the Porte, but its letters were still terse by Ottoman standards. In contrast, letters from the sultan were always written assuming a superior position to the English Crown. Some efforts were made to soften the tone of letters but the embassy had a policy of keeping translations as close to the original as possible.²

For this reason, despite the efforts of translators, Roe still felt obliged, on more than one occasion, to play down the 'presumptuous style of this court', asking James I to concentrate on the substance of the letter and not its style.³ This was important because the contents of the letters showed a measure of respect for both the ambassador at the Porte and for the English Crown.

In the first years of the English embassy at the Porte, ambassadors overcame the potential offence to the Crown by establishing a parallel correspondence between Safiye and the Queen. This was a mutually beneficial exchange, but it reinforced the respect offered to

1 Susan Skilliter has provided invaluable research on this subject in Harborne and in 'Three Letters from the Ottoman 'Sultana' Safiye to Queen Elizabeth I' in Documents from Islamic Chanceries (ed.) S.M. Stern (Oxford, 1965) pp. 119-57. For examples of early letters, see Ahmet Refik: Türkler ve Kraliçe Elizabet (Istanbul, 1932); A.N.Kurat: Türk-İngiliz Münasebetlerinin Başlangıcı ve Gelişmesi 1553-1610 (Ankara, 1953); H Dereli: Kraliçe Elizabeth Devrinde Türkler ve İngilizler: Bir Araştırma (Istanbul, 1951), pp. 177-208.

2 PRO SP97/10 f. 90 Roe to James I, 24 Jul. 1624.

3 Negs. pp. 30-32 Roe to King James I, 28 Apr. 1622; pp. 264-5 Roe to Sir George Calvert, 25 Jul. 1624; pp. 613-18 Roe to Conway, 17/27 Feb. 1626/7.

the English Crown. The sultana was more cordial in her letters than the sultan was prepared to be and her correspondence sustained Elizabeth I's interest in the Levant.

This exchange was, by its nature, short-lived but an Ottoman initiative attempted to reinforce this relationship with the English Crown. Successive sultans sent so-called *Fetihname* ('Victory') letters to the English Crown, informing them of the details of a particularly successful campaign and asking for the continuation of amity between the two states.¹ Such letters were written in a condescending tone and there was an element of propaganda to them but they were an effort to show that the Ottoman Empire was maintaining its part in the Anglo-Ottoman relationship and hoped that the English would do the same. These letters were usually sent at times when the Porte was especially anxious to use England as an active ally and emphasise that one of the greatest bargaining powers which the English had at the Porte was their status as a reliable partner against Habsburg interests. This argument is reinforced by the fact that the sultan had very little correspondence with James I while he conducted his policy of peace with Habsburg Spain.

The embassy had a wider administrative brief than the processing of petitions at the Porte. Consular work made up the third field of activity for which the embassy administration was responsible.

The Consular Network

The embassy, which doubled as the Consulate of Constantinople, had consular administrative duties in addition to diplomatic administration at the Porte. These involved recording transactions between merchants in Constantinople, drafting instructions to consuls resident with the other English merchant communities in Smyrna, Aleppo and the Mediterranean Islands and recording the minutes of the Company Court in Constantinople.

This consular administration served an important diplomatic function, even though it

¹ See extract in Moryson: *Itinerary*, III p. 445; Purchas, X pp. 409-11; Geoffrey Lewis: 'The Utility of Ottoman Fethnames' in: *Historians of the Middle East* (Eds.) Bernard Lewis & P.M. Holt (Oxford, 1962). For the detailed analysis of one such letter, see J.M. Stein: 'A Letter to Queen Elizabeth I from the Grand Vizier as a Source for the Study of Ottoman Diplomacy' *Archivum Ottomanicum* XI (1986)[1988]pp. 231-43.

was commercial in nature. Efforts to regulate trade through the written registration of contracts, which began in Roe's residence, developed partly from the Company's desire to exert more direct control over merchants. They were, however, as much in the interests of the ambassador in his diplomatic capacity because they recorded the details of specific cases and established precedents. These were necessary to build up a strong case in diplomatic suits involving the security and privileges of the English community in Constantinople.

The administration of communications between Istanbul and the other consulates in the Levant was equally important to the diplomatic security of the Community. Firstly, instructions to consulates meant that all English communities in the region were kept abreast of affairs at the Porte and of any policy decisions which might affect them. Secondly, the consulates provided a network of intelligence concerning the situation in their locality, which allowed the Porte to make assessments of the general situation in Anatolia and the Mediterranean region and act accordingly.

The role which consulates played in gathering intelligence is difficult to characterize because the English embassy also collected information from sources close to the Porte. Nevertheless, consular dispatches provided an early warning system for developments in the region. In the 1650s, Bendish was warned by various Mediterranean consulates about the progress of several Quaker missionaries who were making their way to Constantinople.¹ As a result, Bendish was able to move quickly to limit their activities at the Porte. Likewise, in the same period, consuls kept Bendish informed of the reaction of the English communities to Admiral Blake's Mediterranean campaign so that he could establish the best defence to use at the Porte.

In addition to this formal intelligence network, raw intelligence was also passed on to the embassy by the many English travellers in the Levant at this time. Travellers noted the formation of fleets deployed in the Mediterranean and the equipment and tactics employed

¹ See William C. Braithwaite: The Beginnings of Quakerism (London, 1923) p. 418 ff.

by Ottoman armies.¹ While this was not the high level intelligence which ambassadors could gain from sources at the Porte, such amateur observations could confirm or strengthen other intelligence and provide background information for the ambassador's regular despatches home. These various links with the regions ensured that the English embassy in Constantinople did not act in isolation but developed policy from an informed position.

The scope and sophistication of administrative activities at the English embassy are indicative of a professional institution, linked both to the authorities in England and the English communities in the Levant. While postal routes were inherently insecure, the embassy fought strongly to keep their communications network functioning effectively. In the administrative business at the Porte, too, the embassy administration provided invaluable support to the ambassador. This ranged from a consultative role in the conduct of negotiations to the collation of intelligence and the processing of all documentation required. With this strong administrative machinery in place and continually evolving to fit the changing circumstances and demands of the Porte, successive ambassadors were able to build and develop competent policies to maintain their interests at the Porte.

¹ See H. Blount: A Voyage into the Levant (London, 1636).

PART III

THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY

THE PROTECTION AND REGULATION OF THE ENGLISH MERCHANT COMMUNITY IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

CHAPTER V. THE FOREIGN RESIDENT COMMUNITIES: CAPITULATIONS, COOPERATION AND COMPETITION

The first duty of the English ambassador at the Porte was to safeguard the main merchant communities in Constantinople, Smyrna and Aleppo.¹ The rights and privileges protecting the English communities were laid down in the *ahidname*, or charter of capitulations, which each ambassador renewed in his name on arrival at the Porte. Each nation had its own capitulations which provided the legal framework within which foreign residents (*müste'min*) could live and trade.² The importance of these capitulations has long been recognised and much has been written about their origins and legality.³ My purpose is to establish how the Ottoman authorities and the English ambassadors viewed the capitulations in the first half of the seventeenth century.

A study of the English capitulations in operation illustrates the frequency and severity of contraventions by both parties. It throws light on the daily working relationship of the

1 Ambassadors were also responsible for, but less effective in protecting the smaller English communities in Tunis and Algiers.

2 For the routine commercial business of these English trading communities, see G.P. Ambrose: 'The Levant Company Mainly from 1640-1753' Oxford Univ. B.Litt thesis 1933; Wood, Chaps. II-V and Kütükoğlu: *Osmanlı-İngiliz İktisadi Münasebetleri* I pt. 1.

3 On the history of the Ottoman capitulations, see Halil İnalcık: *İmtiyazat* (Commercial Privileges; Capitulations) in *EI*². For their legal basis, Daniel Goffman: 'The Capitulations and the Question of Authority in Levantine Trade' *Journal of Turkish Studies* 10 (1986) pp. 155-61. On the English capitulations, see *Harborne*; Paul Wittek: 'The Turkish Documents in Hakluyt's Voyages' *BIHR* 19 (1941-3) pp. 121-39; Horniker: '*Anglo-Turkish Relations*' and V. Menage: 'The English Capitulation of 1580' *IJMES* 12 (1980) pp. 373-83. For printed translations of several *ahidname* including the French agreement of 1535/6, considered to be the model for later capitulations, and the first English agreement of 1580, see Joel Hurewitz: *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics 1535-1914* (Yale, 1975), pp. 1-5, 8-10. For controversy surrounding the 1535/6 capitulations, see Gaston Zeller: 'Une Légende qui a la Vie Durée: Les Capitulations de 1535' & rejoinder by Joseph Billioud in *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* II (1955) pp. 127-32; Arthur Leon Horniker & Niels Steensgaard: 'The First French Capitulations: 1536 or 1569' *Scandinavian Econ. Hist. Rev.* 16 (1968) pp. 168-70 and Joseph Matuz: 'A Propos de la Validité des Capitulations de 1535 entre l'Empire Ottoman et la France' *Turcica* XXIV (1992) pp. 183-93.

English embassy with the Ottoman authorities, helps to show the attitude of the Porte to the wider foreign community and the reaction of Western resident representatives to such treatment. The capitulations also played a paradoxical role in relations between the various foreign resident representatives at the Porte. They bound them together since an infringement against one set of capitulations threatened all, but also caused hostility as each resident vied for better terms which excluded competing nations.

Although the capitulations dealt mainly with the detail of trade arrangements, they were not, as Sackville Crow (1639-47) supposed, a mere trading licence.¹ They actually defined the legal status of the community and its ambassador, thus establishing the extent of the merchant community's freedom of action and an ambassador's diplomatic immunity. In the seventeenth century, the Ottoman authorities had a very different perception of this status from the Western residents within its territories.

In Islamic legal terms, the capitulations transformed the English from being *harbi*, unprotected members of the *dar al-harb* (non-Muslim territory) into legal visitors to the *dar al-islam* (muslim territory) with a muslim safe conduct (*aman*).² The capitulations were a unilateral grant from the sultan which suspended for the chosen Western state the Islamic concept that Muslim and non-Muslim states and individuals could not conduct peaceful relations. This idea was based on the concept of the permanent hostility of irreconcilable ideologies.³

The personal nature of this grant meant that it had to be renewed on the accession of each new sultan. This provided both parties with an opportunity to change the existing arrangements to their own advantage. Throughout the period in question, the English gradually extended their privileges so that by 1661, successive ambassadors had established

1 PRO SP97/16 f. 215 Crow to Secretary of State, Mar. 1639. Crow later admitted that the capitulations, which took some time to renew, were vital for the protection of the merchant community, 'without capitulations to back the commands, I still live in jealousy of ill accident, SP97/16 f. 299 Crow to Secretary of State, 29 Oct. 1640.

2 See J. Schacht: *Aman* in *EI*² pp. 429-31.

3 See Hans Kruse: The Islamic Doctrine of International Treaties: *Islamic Quarterly* I no. 3 (1954) pp. 152-8

a broad base of commercial and diplomatic freedom.¹

This enlargement of status was not clear-cut in the early seventeenth century. Western ambassadors grew to expect contraventions by the Ottoman authorities on a local level and in negotiations at the Porte. Thomas Roe (1622–28) and Peter Wych (1628–39) considered minor contraventions as the natural background to negotiations. Wych in particular, recognised that many breaches were due to the individual corruption of officers and not to a wider policy of repression. He noted that:

'Though some wranglings doe now and then happen through the corruption of inferior officers, yet all doth receive a faire accomodation, and no nation passeth so well, nor with so much reputation as the English doth.'²

The number of cases in which the Grand Vizier, as the sultan's representative, overturned a decision by a lesser officer supports this assessment. The sultan or his deputies were also used as a successful court of appeal for local cases involving the English community. This interference by the Porte demonstrates the tension between local and state interpretations of the law inherent in the capitulations.

Under *shari'a* law, an *ahidname* allowing Westerners *müste'min* status was a temporary grant valid for a year, exempting them from all local taxes. After this period, any foreigners still residing in Ottoman territory were considered *zimmi* (non-muslim *reaya*) and were liable to the *cizye* (head tax) and *haraç* (land tax). The Ottomans had extended the period of immunity to ten years within the articles of the *ahidname* but the English succeeded in making it permanent in the 1601 capitulations.³ Local officers, who did not regard themselves as bound by the Porte, were less inclined to do so.⁴ This caused conflict between them and the merchant community, who considered their action an infringement of the capitulations. The

1 The capitulations of 1675 are generally cited as a landmark in the establishment of English privileges at the Porte. In fact Sir John Finch was only codifying the successful additions of his predecessors. They survived in this form for the rest of the Ottoman period, especially after 1739 when Mahmud I made them permanent, thus removing the personal right of renewal from his heirs.

2 PRO SP97/16 f. 184 Wych to Secretary of State, 23 Jan. 1633

3 Hurewitz: *Middle East*, I p. 4, 9

4 See below, chap. 6.

Porte generally recognised that the capitulations prevailed over local law, and English ambassadors, despite their complaints that the capitulations were not maintained, found their appeals upheld.

In addition there were, however, several attempts by the Ottoman authorities to restrict or alter the capitulations. Such cases generally arose when state ministers, like their local counterparts, tried to follow the letter of the law rather than its spirit.

In 1613, the *Kadı* of Pera tried to make the foreign communities and their dragomans pay towards a new mosque in Constantinople, effectively imposing the *haraç* upon them.¹ The foreign community considered this a contravention of the capitulations. In view of the severity of the situation, for once, the foreign ambassadors put aside their differences and visited the *Mufti* together to complain that the *Kadı*'s action was contrary to the capitulations. The *Mufti* argued according to the *Shari'a* that long-term residents were obliged to pay taxes and that the capitulations were illegally exempting them from it.² The foreign residents were unable to gain support from any of the Viziers on this matter. The only restriction they could gain was that only foreigners who had resided in Constantinople for a long period and were married to Ottoman subjects were liable.³ This incident once again emphasised that the authorities were trying to restore the capitulations to the traditional *Shari'a* interpretation. Other actions, described below, against the foreign communities during this period, suggest a general policy aimed at limiting the capitulations.

As well as seeking to raise more revenue, the Ottomans had another reason for trying to alter the capitulations. The Ottoman authorities were motivated by a desire to protect their interests which they considered were being eroded by Western privileges. In the second decade

¹ Dragomans were protected from taxes by their status as embassy personnel. On this occasion, the Ottoman authorities made thorough preparations before declaring the tax, by ordering that the names and status of all embassy servants should be recorded. See PRO SP97/7 f. 53 Pindar to Dudley Carleton, 3 Sept. 1613.

² CSPV 1613-15 p. 75 no. 155 Cristoforo Valier, Venetian Ambassador to Constantinople, to Doge and Senate, 5 Dec. 1613

³ See A.H. de Groot: The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic (Leiden/Istanbul, 1978) p. 139

of the seventeenth century they were concerned with two aspects of the capitulations.

Firstly, they feared that increasing Western involvement in trade would exclude Ottoman merchants from the Levant. At the audience described above, the *Mufti* countered the ambassadors' threats that they would remove their communities by arguing that even if no other merchants came in their place, Constantinople would manage with her own people.

In 1614, the Porte also revealed a second concern: that the protection afforded to Western residents was allowing entry to Westerners hostile to the Porte, most notably Spanish subjects.

In a particularly spirited attempt to prevent this, the Grand Vizier, Nasuh Paşa, ordered all ambassadors to submit their capitulations to him, removed the clause giving protection to foreign nationals on English or French ships and altered other clauses. He then resealed the capitulations and returned them to the ambassadors.¹

Understandably, the foreign ambassadors were incensed by such treatment but the Vizier proved intransigent. Eventually, all the ambassadors agreed to the deletion of the foreign nationals clause in return for the restitution of all other altered clauses. This surrender highlights the fact that western nations were not always able to maintain their capitulations fully, even less to gain extensions.

Another series of concerted efforts to restrict the capitulations occurred in 1634. The entire merchant community had their houses searched and sealed and were themselves imprisoned until they paid a collective ransom. In addition, the French ambassador was forced to demolish a new church he had been building. The reason given for the search was to confiscate arms and munitions, while the demolition was ordered because the French ambassador had not sought permission for the work from Sultan Murad.²

The first aspect of this incident reveals a general insecurity on the part of the Ottoman authorities. It might be argued that the search was justifiable since the capitulations permitted

1 *CSPV* 1613-15 p. 102 no. 210 Cristoforo Valier, Venetian Ambassador to Constantinople to the Doge and Senate, 21 Mar. 1614; pp. 104-6 no. 217 Ibid to Ibid, 3 Apr. 1614; p. 114 no. 237 Ibid to Ibid, 16 Apr. 1614.

2 PRO SP97/15 f. 235 Wych to Secretary Coke, 25 Jan. 1634

searches for escaped slaves, fugitive criminals (often Greek or Italian subjects accused of spying) and smuggled goods. However, the emphasis on firearms points to the real motive. Under Ottoman law, *zimmi* subjects were not permitted to carry fire-arms. The Ottoman authorities appear to have been experimenting with extending this rule to the *müste'min* communities.¹ The second part of the episode was more in keeping with the capitulations. It was understandable that the Porte wanted to maintain the restrictions imposed on Christian communities concerning the building of new churches, especially during this period when Kadı-zade, as preacher at Aya Sofya, was condemning all innovations as threats to religious piety.²

It is less clear where this severe policy originated. The *Kapudan Paşa* was responsible for executing it but this was within his jurisdiction as security and justice officer for Kasımpaşa and Galata.³ The Venetian bailo, Pietro Foscarini, noted that other high-ranking officers, although refusing to offer any compensation, were not very happy about the action.

'The ill will of his majesty [Murad IV] against the Ambassadors has prevailed against the good intention of the Caimecam [*Kaymakam*], the *Mufti* and others. So they say nothing about indemnifying the merchants and declare that it is impossible to restore the arms, considering they have made good all their offences.'⁴

This suggests that the policy came from the top, from Murad IV. It is in keeping with the harsh measures he instituted against Ottoman subjects in general. The refusal of all public figures to overrule it also points to his controlling presence. Wych reported that his efforts to

1 Ronald Jennings has ascertained from his study of the Kayseri records that during the early seventeenth century, the Ottoman state was cracking down on the unlicensed use of firearms by the Anatolian *reaya* (taxpaying subjects). The authorities were concerned about banditry and perceived weapons as a threat to the welfare of society. See Ronald C. Jennings: 'Firearms, Bandits and Gun Control' *Archivum Ottomanicum* 6 (1980) pp. 340-58, pp. 350-51

2 Kadı-zade was at Aya Sofya from 1631 until his death in 1635 and influenced Murad IV's strong views. See Madeleine C. Zilfi: 'The Kadızadelis: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth Century Istanbul' *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 45 (1986) pp. 251-69, pp. 257-58.

3 de Groot: *Dutch Republic* p. 31

4 *CSPV* 1632-6 p. 201 no. 267 Pietro Foscarini to Doge and Senate, 16 Mar. 1634

reverse the confiscation of weapons had been in vain.¹ He noted that the *Kapudan Paşa* had warned him that he should not speak of the matter further; it should be forgotten and a new start made.² Another indication that the Murad was responsible was that once he became personally embroiled in the Baghdad campaign, the situation at the Porte rapidly stabilised and the English ambassador was able to report a return to business as usual.

This belies the argument that Ottoman sultans consistently deputed the responsibility of government to their viziers from the early seventeenth century. Murad IV was undoubtedly an exception to the general trend towards sultanic seclusion and his efforts to control the foreign communities show that he was fully aware of the political situation at the Porte.

Although the status quo returned after the events of 1634, the attitude of foreign ambassadors and their authorities at home towards the Porte changed subtly. The episode had emphasised the difference between conditions at the Porte and those in a western embassy. The nations represented at the Porte viewed it as a gross contravention of their personal diplomatic immunity and the security of their communities. The Venetian ambassador in England reported that ministers 'look upon it as a manifest infraction of privileges and an open violation of the *jus gentium*.'³ This was echoed by Secretary Coke who complained to Wych

'none of his [Murad IV's] predecessors did so much forget not only common justice but the laws of nations of humane societies... and violate the persons of publique ambassadors whom al nations hold sacred.'⁴

Herein lay the gulf of perception between the Ottoman State and the foreign resident communities on the latter's status. English complaints all sprang from their view that the capitulations were a joint agreement drawn up according to recognised Western norms of

1 Wych did not succeed in obtaining the restitution of the English merchants' weapons, although ambassadors were allowed to purchase new ones for their own use. See PRO SP97/15 f.243 Wych to Secretary of State, 5 Mar. 1634.

2 PRO SP97/15 f. 243 Wych to Secretary of State, 5 Mar. 1634

3 CSPV 1632-36 p. 212 no. 284 Vincenzo Gussoni to the Doge and Senate, 14 Apr. 1634

4 PRO SP97/15 f. 271 Coke to Wych, 4 Oct. 1634

international law.¹

The growing concept of international law in the West centred around the rights of extraterritoriality, that is diplomatic immunity for ambassadors from the laws of the country in which they served. Extraterritoriality had been a theoretical concept in the Middle Ages. It became a reality with the establishment and spread of resident embassies in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and the growth of ideas of national sovereignty and interests.² It was given definition by Grotius's De Jure Belli ac Pacis which argued that ambassadors should be removed from the jurisdiction of municipal law. This developed with the idea that an ambassador, in his public role as a king's proxy, could not be subject to the law of another state.³

To a certain extent the terms of the capitulations seemed to support such ideas of international law as were developing in the West. The Ottoman authorities incorporated the concept of extraterritoriality, extending it to consular jurisdiction for the community. This allowed ambassadors to judge internal legal disputes without involving local law. The capitulations even abolished the idea of collective responsibility for debts so that an entire merchant community could not be held to ransom over an individual's debts.

Despite such similarities, there were striking differences in the way which the Porte viewed these privileges. Western nations considered the status of an ambassador inviolable because contracts of international law made it so. The Ottoman state, however, developed its international relations through non-contractual grants. It considered diplomatic immunity as a privilege which could be removed as easily as it was awarded, if the sultan, as the grantee,

1 The English belief that the capitulations were a bilateral treaty is clear from Elizabeth I's letter of accreditation for Harborne, sent to Murad III in [Nov.] 1582 where she describes the agreement as 'paxis foedus.' See Hakluyt, V pp.224-6; Wittek: Turkish Documents p. 136 n. 4

2 For the development of concepts of national interest and sovereignty, see J.A.W. Gunn: Politics and the Public Interest in the Seventeenth Century (London, 1969).

3 See E.R. Adair: The Extraterritoriality of Ambassadors in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (London, 1929), p. 6.

considered it appropriate.¹ Both Ottomans and Westerners alike regularly pressed the capitulations into service to suit their own interpretation. It is clear, however, that by the mid-seventeenth century Western ambassadors were winning the battle of extending the capitulations.

This difference in interpretation explains why treatment of ambassadors at the Porte was at variance with Western concepts of immunity. One example of this occurred in the wake of the imprisonment of the merchant communities in 1634. In contravention of the capitulations, several French sailors had been detained in Constantinople to compensate for the debts of the former French ambassador, Philippe de Harlay, Comte de Césy.² His successor, Henri de Gournay, the Comte de Marcheville, had refused to work for their release but apparently encouraged them to vent their spleen by causing a public disturbance outside de Césy's house.³ De Marcheville was arrested and sent summarily away from the Porte 'givinge him noe time to dispose of anie thinge in his house or to make anie provition or anie other then twoe servants to imbarke with him.'⁴

This dismissal, following a long running clash between the Porte and the French representatives, might be written off as an exception, caused by an aggressive sultan, an indiscreet ambassador and diminishing French influence at the Porte. However, it was not unique, as acts of humiliation, violence, and even imprisonment against ambassadors occurred with a frequency unheard of in Western embassies. The ability of an ambassador to avoid, or at least reduce, such severe treatment depended largely on the diplomatic and commercial strength of the state he represented. This explains why English ambassadors suffered less than their counterparts from breaches of their immunity.

There was one notable occasion when an English ambassador, Thomas Bendish (1647-

1 This adds weight to the thesis proposed above, p. 138, that an ambassador was accepted at the Porte as a Sultanic appointment.

2 See below pp. 153 ff.

3 Gérard Tongas: Les relations de la France Avec L'Empire Ottoman (Toulouse, 1942) p. 31

4 PRO SP97/15 f. 252 Wych to Secretary of State, 24 Apr. 1634

60), found himself briefly imprisoned by the *Mufti*, Bahai Efendi in 1651.¹ He had refused to accept the *Mufti*'s judgement on a dispute involving the English consul at Smyrna and alleged English support for the Venetians in the Ottoman-Venetian war.² His case contrasts with that of the Comte de Marcheville as he was rapidly released and the *Mufti* dismissed.³ This suggests that while individual ministers might vent their frustration at the extent of foreign privileges on the English, they were prevented from damaging the wider trade relationship which gave the English their strength at the Porte.

Ambassadors tried to take concerted action, to present a united front and to work together on breaches of capitulations, as issues common to the whole diplomatic community. Successive English ambassadors argued that their collective reliance on the capitulations should create a community of interests. However, such high-minded sentiments were not so simple to put into practice. Indeed, as Almorò Nani, the Venetian Bailo during Eyre's residence noted, in most cases 'experience is constantly showing that one can do better alone than in conjunction with others.'⁴ One of the strengths of the Porte was that it had admitted representatives from nations which were in direct competition with one another for trade and influence in foreign affairs. Ambassadors found it difficult to put aside these rivalries and pursue a campaign of joint action.

Often, ambassadors began petitions in concert but ended in dispute, because of disagreements over the best way to present their case. A clear example of this occurred in November 1623 when Thomas Roe attempted to secure joint action after the Ottoman

1 For the details of this case, see Danişman: *Naima* pp. 2101-3; Taner Timur: 'Müftü Bahai Efendi, Bektaş Ağa ve İngiliz Elçisi: 1649-1651' *Tarih ve Toplum* 1.iv (1984) pp. 280-86.

2 The consul in question had been accused of supplying Venetian ships with grain. This seems to have been a trumped up charge brought by the *Kadı* of Smyrna who was frustrated by the consul's refusal to bring commercial disputes to his court. The charges revived Ottoman concerns about English ships in Venetian service. For the development of English policy to deal with these accusations, see below, p. 229 ff.

3 For further examples illustrating the harsher treatment which the French received from the Ottoman authorities, see Madeleine C. Zilfi: *The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Post-Classical Age* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988) p. 152.

4 *CSPV* 1619-21 p. 410 no. 555 Almorò Nani and Zorzi Guistinian, Venetian ambassadors at Constantinople, to Doge and Senate, 24 Sept. 1620

authorities had imposed double customs duties and added new tariffs.¹ The English had a particularly strong reason for wanting united action since one of the customs officials had removed their capitulations and declared them counterfeit. Although the Vizier had returned them and tried to placate Roe, he refused to remove the new duties.² This intransigence also posed a threat to the trade of the other resident foreign communities and they agreed to join with Roe to make a complaint.

The first step was to hold a meeting to discuss possible courses of action. The presence of all ambassadors prevented partisanship or double-dealing when decisions were taken.

Roe took a leading role in the discussion, suggesting that single petitions should be presented to the Vizier by each ambassador. He also proposed that if this action failed, the ambassadors should take their petitions directly to Murad IV, thus implementing the clause of their capitulations which gave them direct recourse to the sultan in cases relating to their privileges. This approach avoided a confrontation between the French and English over rights of precedence and carried greater authority at the Porte. In practical terms, it gave the issue a higher profile because the complaint was repeated by each representative. It was also the established form of petition for an ambassador to cite the capitulations of his nation, thus appealing directly to the sultan as the grantee of such privileges.

The French ambassador, however, had a different view of the petition. He recommended that the ambassadors should jointly present a single petition, signed by each of them, or at least present their petitions together. He argued that this would reinforce the sense of community. Of course, this plan would also reopen the issue of precedence but Roe was loathe to support it for the more important reason that it would be viewed as an innovation by the Ottoman authorities. In the previous decade, they had shown their suspicion of additions to the privileges of the foreign communities and Roe did not want to alienate the

¹ Double customs was the practise of forcing ships to pay taxes on goods at each port they visited, rather than once on arrival in Ottoman territory. It continued to be a problem for merchants throughout this period and Thomas Bendish was still pleading the terms of the capitulations against them in May 1653: see ERO D/DHf 04 f. 7 Diary of Sir Thomas Bendish, 13 May 1653.

² Negs. pp. 187-88 Roe to Secretary Calvert, 1 Nov. 1623

Porte further at a time of instability.

The French ambassador proved inflexible on the issue and this led to the complete break-down of the plan, in Roe's view preventing the ambassadors from reasserting their rights.¹

The severe treatment of the foreign communities in 1634 also brought the ambassadors together to plead for the maintenance of their capitulations. In the aftermath of the imprisonment of the merchants, however, it became clear that the ambassadors, while working towards the same goal, were not acting completely in concert. The English, in particular, as the most successful trading nation at the Porte, suffered more from the foreign communities than at the hands of the Ottoman authorities.

A dispute broke out over the share of the collective ransom (*avania*) to be paid by each nation. The French, Venetian and Dutch representatives argued that, since the English enjoyed the most prosperous trade in the region, they should pay two-thirds, the largest proportion. Wych opposed this, preferring the Ottoman method of dividing the amount according to the number of merchants within each community. He was at a disadvantage in the negotiations because English merchants had already paid large sums to the Ottomans. Wych compromised by deferring the business, rather than agreeing to a new method of collection which would prove detrimental to the English community.²

The English merchants, however, were frustrated when they realised that they had paid more than their counterparts. They reported the matter to the *Bostancıbaşı*, who ordered that merchants from the other three nations should be brought before him to explain the inequality of the payment. Ottoman involvement was justified because the receiving officials

1 In 1624, when the ambassadors decided to complain jointly against general abuses of the capitulations, they compromised by presenting a single petition which did not mention the ambassadors within the text and was signed by Roe first. As Roe feared, this joint appeal blunted the impact of the complaint and received no response from the Porte. See *Negs.* p. 269-71 Roe to Secretary George Calvert, 20/30 Aug. 1624

2 PRO SP97/16 f. 1 Wych to Secretary of State, 2 Jan. 1635. This was Wych's response to accusations from the Venetian ambassador in England that he acted improperly in this matter.

were an interested party as the disputed payment was due to the Ottoman authorities.¹ In the eyes of the foreign ambassadors, the matter was an internal dispute between their communities, and they considered Ottoman involvement a breach of their consular jurisdiction.

Wych, who seems to have been genuinely unaware of the merchants' appeal to the Ottoman authorities, was accused by the other ambassadors of setting a dangerous precedent in allowing Ottoman intervention in a dispute among the foreign communities. Indeed, the Venetians considered the action so dangerous that they pressed their ambassador in England, Francesco Zonca, to complain against Wych to the various Secretaries of State.² This resulted in the sending of instructions that Wych must continue to have friendly relations with the Bailo and prevent merchants seeking Ottoman justice.³ Zonca even approached Paul Pindar (1612-20) as a former English ambassador to the Porte to corroborate that the English had contravened the capitulations by appealing to Turkish justice.⁴

Back in Constantinople, Wych acted promptly to dispel this view, agreeing to join with the other ambassadors and inform the *Bostancıbaşı* that they did not want him 'to meddle in that business which concerned onlie ourselves.' That the *Bostancıbaşı* readily agreed suggests that the Porte had indeed retreated from its aggressive policy of the spring. Nevertheless, the *Bostancıbaşı* sent a message to the French, Dutch and Venetians warning them that unless the dispute was resolved fairly for the English, it could rekindle Murad's anger against the foreign communities.

This veiled threat indicates that the English were favoured at the Porte. It did little to

1 Under the capitulations, disputes involving an Ottoman subject and a foreign merchant were subject to the Ottoman justice system.

2 CSPV 1632-36 p. 253 no. 330 Venetian Senate to Secretary in England, 4 Aug. 1634; p. 266-8 no. 343 Francesco Zonca, Venetian Secretary in England to Doge and Senate, 1 Sept. 1634: On Zonca's visit to Secretary Windebank, the latter supported Wych, arguing that 'he knew the ambassador for a prudent man and was inclined to believe that he had some plausible pretext to justify his action.'

3 CSPV 1632-36 p. 279-80 no. 358 Zonca to Doge and Senate, 29 Sept. 1634

4 CSPV 1632-36 pp. 222-8 no. 343 Francesco Zonca to Doge and Senate, 1 Sept. 1634

influence the foreign communities' decision. The ambassadors took two stormy meetings to agree that the ransom should be divided into eight parts, of which the English should provide three and a half; the French and the Venetians two parts each; and the Dutch half a part.¹

The attempts of the other foreign communities to force England to bear the bulk of the *avania* (fine) and their later complaints about the English appeal to Ottoman justice were motivated by insecurity about their own trading positions in the Levant. The English were proving by far the most successful of the competing nations at the Porte, especially in the 1630s when benefitting from their neutrality in the Thirty Years War, they conducted a substantial trade in freighting foreign goods to the Levant.²

In addition, they had begun to sell the so-called 'new draperies', which imitated the quality Venetian cloth but were produced more cheaply.³ These increasingly threatened Venetian trade, as the Venetian bailo was only too aware. He complained the following year that:

'the English devote their attention to depriving our people of the little trade that remains to them in the mart of Constantinople, as they imitate Venetian cloth and make borders after the Venetian manner.'⁴

Furthermore, the combination of trading under a Company monopoly and the

1 PRO SP97/16 f. 1 Wych to Secretary of State, 2 Jan, 1635; CSPV 1632-36 p. 236 no. 310 Piero Foscarini, Venetian Bailo at Constantinople, to the Doge and Senate, 23 Jun. 1634. Wych's version of events suggests that the final agreement left the English only paying ⅓.

2 See H. Taylor: 'Trade, Neutrality and "the English Road" 1630-48' Ec.HR 25 (1972) pp. 236-60; J.S. Kepler: 'Fiscal Aspects of the English Carrying Trade During the Thirty Years War' Ec.HR (2nd ed.) 25 (1972) pp. 261-83.

3 For an analysis of English involvement in this trade and the developing competition in the Levant, see C.H. Wilson: 'Cloth Production and International Competition in the Seventeenth Century' Ec.HR n.s. 13 (1960) pp. 209-21; D.C. Coleman: 'An Innovation and its Diffusion "The New Draperies"' Ec.HR n.s. 22 (1969) pp. 417-29; R.T. Rapp: 'The Unmaking of the Mediterranean Trade Hegemony: International Trade Rivalry and Commercial Revolution' Journal Economic History 35 (1975) pp. 499-52; Niels Steensgaard: 'The Seventeenth Century Crisis' in Geoffrey Parker (ed.): The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century (London, 1978) pp. 26-56 esp. pp. 32-4.

4 See CSPV 1632-36 p. 408 no. 500 Piero Foscarini, Venetian Bailo at Constantinople to Doge and Senate, 27 Jun. 1635; p. 569 no. 665 Piero Foscarini to Doge and Senate, 27 May 1636.

jurisdiction of an ambassador had proved a winning one.¹ Prices could be regulated within the Company, and successive ambassadors worked to ensure that the English maintained favourable customs rates of three per cent in contrast to the usual five per cent paid by other nations.²

All these advantages ensured that the English community was closely scrutinised by its rivals, who seized any opportunity to undermine the English position. This was illustrated in another dispute occurring during Wych's residence when the French ambassador resorted to Ottoman justice, claiming that the merchandise of an English ship was in fact owned by the French.

The ship in question was the 'Concord', which carried French goods from Marseilles via Smyrna to Constantinople. Its cargo included cloth worth a thousand r  als. The interim French ambassador, Philippe de Harlay, Comte de C  sy, claimed that the goods actually belonged to merchants from Marseilles, who had used English names to avoid contributing to the cost of the ambassador's debt. Such a suggestion seems somewhat unlikely but de C  sy was a desperate man.

While obtaining concessions for the French merchants at Aleppo in 1620, he had borrowed considerable sums from English, Venetian and Ottoman merchants to pay for gifts and bribes to the Ottoman authorities.³ He had not been repaid as expected by the Marseilles merchants who operated French trade in the Levant and attempts to pay back the debt with

1 For the relationship between the ambassador and merchant community and the organisation of the other trading nations in the Levant which, with the exception of the Dutch, was not operated by a company, see Niels Steensgaard: 'Consuls and Nations in the Levant from 1570-1650' Scandinavian Economic History Review 15 (1967) pp. 13-55; Alexander H. de Groot: 'The Organisation of Western European Trade in the Levant, 1500-1800' in Companies and Trade (ed.) L. Blusse and F.S. Gaastra (Leiden, 1981) pp. 231-41.

2 Harborne managed to secure this advantage, see Bodl. Tanner MSS. 77 f. 8; Wood p. 27-8.

3 Roe estimated that the English were owed fifty thousand dollars from de C  sy's debt, which totalled two hundred thousand dollars. See PRO SP97/8 f. 289 Roe to Secretary George Calvert, 4 Dec. 1622. By 1628, de C  sy's debt to the English had increased to sixty thousand dollars. See PRO SP97/14 f. 92 Roe to Duke of Buckingham, 8 Mar. 1627/8.

a percentage of Aleppo customs duties had also failed.¹ This left him gradually more indebted to both foreign and local communities and he was forced to remain in Constantinople until his debts, and the interest which had accrued on them, had been paid off.²

New discussions between the French and other ambassadors to establish the terms of the debt repayment took place in 1633 when two agents from Marseilles arrived to carry out the French king's orders concerning the debt.³ These broke down in a disagreement between de Césy and the then French Ambassador, de Marcheville over the extent to which the debt was to be repaid.⁴ Thereafter, the Ottoman authorities ordered that Marseilles merchants must contribute directly towards his debt from the profits of their sales.⁵

This then was the background to de Césy's extreme claims against the 'Concord'. At first, he acted in accordance with the established precedent of dealing with such a dispute. He asked Wych to examine the ship's books. However, he was not satisfied with Wych's inspection, which found that the goods were owned by English merchants. Instead of asking other ambassadors to arbitrate, he went to the *Kaymakam* and obtained a sequestration order

1 Tongas: Relations pp. 171-82; Negs. pp. 229-30 Roe to Secretary Calvert, 3 Apr. 1624; Steengaard: 'Consuls in the Levant' pp. 38-41.

2 Both Roe and Wych struggled to obtain at least the interest on the debts for their merchants. Roe engaged the aid of the English ambassador in France who secured promises of repayment from the French king. These proved impossible to implement as the king did not wield sufficient control over the merchants. See Negs. pp. 196-7 Edward Herbert, English ambassador in France, to Roe, 27 Nov. 1623; Roe's further instructions to Herbert, PRO SP97/10 f. 141, 26 Oct 1624, when he hoped, in vain, for a speedy resolution of the matter. A memorandum headed 'Notes on the Claim of Francis How and other English Factors at Constantinople against the French Ambassador There' (PRO SP97/14 f. 360) apprised Wych of the situation on his arrival at the Porte.

3 PRO SP97/15 f. 215 Wych to Secretary, 5 Oct. 1633; f. 217 Wych to ?, 5 Oct 1633. Wych reveals that discussions had taken place after creditors had gone to Ottoman justice. The Grand Vizier had instructed the French ambassador to discuss the matter with the other ambassadors, allowing them to judge the case themselves in accordance with the capitulations but requiring a resolution so that Ottoman creditors could be repaid. CSPV 1632-36 p. 156 no. 204 Piero Foscarini to Doge and Senate, 16 Oct. 1633.

4 See PRO SP97/15 f. 217 Wych to ?, 5 Oct. 1633. De Marcheville wanted to restrict the repayment of debts to French creditors. Wych believed he did not intend to deal with the debt problem at all but wanted to use the funds for his own expenses. See PRO SP97/15 f. 249 Wych to Secretary of State, 27 Mar. 1634.

5 Wych reported in March 1634 that three French ships had been detained in Constantinople to contribute to the debt. See PRO SP97/15 f. 249 Wych to Secretary of State, 27 Mar. 1634.

for the 'Concord's' cargo.¹

From an Ottoman perspective, this intervention could be justified on the grounds that Ottoman subjects had an interest in the repayment of the French debt. In the eyes of the foreign communities, the involvement of the Ottoman authorities presented a further threat to their consular jurisdiction. Once again, Wych was forced to redeem the situation as best he could. He managed to secure a hearing of the case in the open *divan* rather than in the *Kadı's* court.² This could be construed as a return to the terms of the capitulations which allowed the foreign communities to appeal to the sultan, in this case represented by the *divan*. When faced with a public hearing, de Césy attempted to delay it, claiming that he had not prepared his witnesses. Eventually, with Wych pressing Ottoman ministers hard for a hearing, the French ambassador was forced to appeal to the Dutch and Venetian ministers, in the hope that they might prove more sympathetic. He asked them to request that the case be placed in their hands. This returned the dispute to the jurisdiction of the foreign communities and Wych had, through pressure on the Ottoman system, retrieved the status quo.

Although Wych accepted the arbitration of the Venetian and Dutch ambassadors, he considered them a more partial jury than the Ottoman authorities.³ They had already excused the French ambassador's action on the grounds that he was desperate. Wych also resented the fact that the English merchants were forced to swear an oath to defend their ownership of the goods. Eventually, the ambassadors decided in favour of the English, as the Venetian bailo noted that there was no indication of fraud in the papers.⁴ Nevertheless, it is understandable that the English did not altogether trust their French, Venetian and Dutch counterparts in trade disputes at the Porte.

1 See PRO SP97/16 f. 55 Wych to Secretary Coke, 4 May 1636.

2 See PRO SP97/16 f. 55 Wych to Secretary Coke, 4 May 1636.

3 This is not surprising given the close scrutiny which the Venetian bailo gave the Concord's goods, noting that 'among the bales of cloth I noticed some which they call "anti-Venetian" which means in imitation and for the destruction of ours.' See CSPV 1632-36 p. 569 no. 665 Piero Foscarini to Doge and Senate, 27 May 1636.

4 Ibid

Even when they did not exhibit outright hostility, the other foreign communities used the favoured position of the English to secure their own position. They deferred action on shared problems, like piracy, until the English had succeeded in persuading the Porte to act. In March 1637, Wych outlined the case of twelve Englishmen held in a Barbary ship off the coast of Smyrna. He had complained to the Porte authorities that this was a contravention of their capitulations and had gained an imperial command instructing the *Kadı* of Smyrna to secure their release.¹ He noted that

'the Christian ambassadors residing heere, are attentive after the success of this business, and if I speede, they will follow in that kinde, how be ytt they have had more reason to beginn, for that manie more of their nation then English doe fall into the captivtie of those Barbarie pirates.'²

The other foreign communities were, in effect, using the English to supply test cases for problems which were common to all.

This device of hiding behind the influence of the English at the Porte may also explain the support which Roe received when he pressed the illegality of an *avania* (fine) on an English shipment of silk in July 1622.³ After a stormy meeting with the Grand Vizier, Roe persuaded the other resident ambassadors to accompany him to the Porte to issue an ultimatum that either the vizier must be removed, or they would remove their merchant communities from the Porte.⁴ This was a bluff by the ambassadors, designed to fix attention on the issue of *avantias*. It was treated as such by the Porte, who did not remove the Vizier but granted a judgement in Roe's favour.⁵ The other ambassadors' endorsement of Roe's case stemmed from the fact that they too were threatened by such fines on goods. As they informed Roe, previously they had feared to antagonise the Porte but with Roe leading the campaign for

1 The Italian translation of this ferman dated 15 Mar. 1637 survives in PRO SP97/16 f. 117

2 PRO SP97/16 f. 119 Wych to Secretary of State, 24 Mar. 1637

3 This was the occasion when Roe threw a copy of his capitulations at the Grand Vizier when the latter threatened Roe's local staff. See above, p. 106 ff.

4 *Negs.* pp. 61-63 Roe to George Calvert, 1 Jul. 1622

5 *Negs.* pp. 64-5 Roe to George Calvert, 14 Jul. 1622

fairer treatment, 'they would all summe one fortune.'¹ It was clearly in their interests to act in this way. If Roe's campaign had failed, then the English would lose influence at the Porte while its success ensured that they were all less vulnerable to such fines, at least in the short-term.

The advantages and disadvantages of joint action were commonly weighed up in this way by the foreign resident ambassadors at the Porte. More often than not the disadvantages outweighed the advantages and no consensus was reached. Only an influential ambassador or an extreme situation could galvanise the foreign resident communities into concerted action. Such situations were usually linked with Ottoman attempts to tax the foreign communities, bringing them more into line with the financial obligations of the domestic population. The Ottoman position is understandable, given the very privileged position of the merchant communities. Clearly, the foreign communities saw such moves as an emergency which required joint action.

Under the terms of the capitulations, merchants possessed very favourable trading privileges. These were substantial enough to prevail over the dangers which accompanied trade in the Levant. However, in the view of the foreign communities, any erosion of these rights, especially with respect to the financial obligations of resident merchants to the Ottoman authorities, might tip the balance against the merchants. It was in the interests of the ambassadors to see that this did not happen. It was also in the interests of the Porte not to act in a way which encouraged foreign merchants to circumvent the Ottoman ports.

Such was the reasoning used by the foreign ambassadors on one rare occasion of wholehearted cooperation which occurred towards the end of Pindar's residence. The Porte proposed that the foreign trading nations pay a tax of one per cent to support the upkeep of the janissaries.² This was to be universally applied at all Ottoman ports where foreign merchant communities resided. The Porte pleaded 'necessity of state' for their actions and were undoubtedly seeking new ways of paying for the ever-increasing burden of army debts.

1 PRO SP105/102 f. 46 *Company Court* in Constantinople, 27 Jul. 1622

2 CSPV 1610-13 pp. 475-76 no. 735 Cristoforo Valier to Doge and Senate, 11 Jan. 1613.

The ambassadors recognised that this was the thin end of the wedge, especially when the Vizier suggested that he considered the amount so small that the ambassadors would not offend him by not paying. The threat behind the tax was emphasised when the Vizier complained that financial privileges had been created when successive Viziers had illegally modified the original capitulations.¹ The Porte was attempting to bring the foreign communities into line with Ottoman subjects but the ambassadors contended that if their merchants were taxed more heavily, prices would rise accordingly and trade would decline. Their final argument, voiced by the Venetian bailo, was that the Porte's minor gain would be at the major expense of trade. The ambassadors did not succeed completely in preventing the Ottoman authorities from trying to tax the foreign communities but they gained a breathing space through their joint opposition. Furthermore, the Porte's later attempts at imposing taxes were more limited in their scope.

Such consensus and the successful outcome which resulted from it was rare at the Porte. From the evidence of the cases described above, the shared problems of the foreign ambassadors were more often compounded by competition than eased by cooperation between the various communities. Problems developed from the desire of both the Ottoman authorities and the ambassadors themselves to interpret the capitulations to their own advantage. However, it is important not to understate actual breaches in the capitulations which occurred in all Ottoman ports. The English community suffered its own share of contraventions in mercantile practice and ambassadors had to deal with such cases alone. The success with which he did so depended on his own relationship with the Porte officials; the proximity of the affected merchant community to the Porte; and the actions of the English consul at each port.²

1 Ibid

2 The majority of internal trade disputes were dealt with at a local level by the consuls and *Company Courts*. The ambassador only dealt with more complex cases, or those with special problems including disputes involving local Ottoman merchants or those affecting the capitulations.

CHAPTER VI. THE SECURITY OF THE ENGLISH MERCHANT COMMUNITIES AT A LOCAL LEVEL

1) Constantinople

Ambassadors had most control over the English community in Constantinople and this is reflected in the level of success in cases involving Constantinople merchants. The strength of the Ambassador within the community was assured by his additional status as Consul of Constantinople. This gave him the presidency of the *Company court* in the city and enabled him to regulate mercantile practice. Regular meetings also kept him informed of any problems currently affecting the merchants.

Ambassadors clearly had the advantage of direct and rapid access to the public figures responsible for deciding and altering Ottoman policy in Constantinople cases. In addition, although they could not generally count on the whole-hearted support of all resident ambassadors, they could often secure the backing of the Dutch, whose political interests were most closely aligned with the English, even if they were direct commercial competitors.¹ On some occasions the English even received support from the Venetians, who had the longest experience of trading at the Porte. The Venetians were less reliable from the 1620s, however, when their trade declined as the English increased in prosperity. Their control over the external postal system from Constantinople allowed them ample opportunity to hinder an English ambassador's attempts to communicate urgent problems to the Company in England.

One notable case where the Venetians exercised this power occurred in 1631 when the Ottoman authorities had impounded an English ship, the 'Dragon', to pay for the debts of a bankrupt English merchant, George More. The Porte intended to take the ship hostage until More repaid his creditors, as he had promised, from goods in England. The Ottomans wanted to protect the interests of Ottoman subjects but this was a clear breach of the capitulations, which protected merchants from collective repayment of debt.² Wych, in a letter sent via

¹ The Dutch first obtained their own capitulations in 1612 and were thereafter independently represented at the Porte.

² The Venetian bailo, Giovanni Capello, reported that More had made such promises, see *CSPV* 1629-31 p. 483 to Doge and Senate, 8 Mar. 1631. For collective debt exemption, see above p. 147.

Buda, complained that his efforts to inform the Levant Company of the situation had been hindered by the Venetian bailo, who had delayed his dispatch.¹

Despite this problem, Wych secured the release of the 'Dragon' simply by pleading the terms of the capitulations. The *Kaymakam* even conceded a substantial reduction in More's debts because the English merchant had been charged excessive interest rates.² Such a conciliatory gesture by the Porte after a clear contravention of the capitulations was a common feature of Anglo-Ottoman relations and reflected the strength of the English position.

The origins of the 'Dragon' case lay in George More's business difficulties.³ Ambassadors did what they could to bail merchants out of such situations but, more importantly, several imposed local regulations on English merchants to prevent them from getting into difficulties. These were in addition to general Company regulations and only applied to the Constantinople community.

The most substantial reorganisation of trading practices was carried out by Thomas Roe in the early 1620s. He aimed to re-establish the security of commercial dealings after the turbulent residence of John Eyre (1619-21) and restore the confidence of the English merchants in Constantinople in an ambassador's ability to act in their interests. In January 1622, Roe ordered all contracts between Ottoman subjects and English merchants to be recorded in the ambassador's register. Later, he extended this regulation, insisting that all contracts worth a hundred dollars or more must be concluded in the presence of the

1 For Wych's complaint, see PRO SP97/15 f. 80 Wych to Dorchester, 12 Mar. 1630/1. Giovanni Capello, the Venetian Bailo, admitted in his reports that the Porte had requested that he hand over any correspondence from English merchants to the Porte. He had refused to do so and the matter was dropped. *CSPV* 1629-31 p. 498 to Doge and Senate, 19 Apr. 1631. It does not necessarily follow that the Bailo did not delay dispatches deliberately. See above p. 113 ff for suspicion of Venetian interference in English post.

2 PRO SP97/15 f. 102 Wych to Dorchester, 12 Jun. 1631

3 More was clearly a dubious character. Once Wych had freed him from prison, secured a reduction in his debt and housed him until he could repay his debts, More repaid the ambassador's considerable efforts on his behalf by becoming a renegade Turk-possibly a way of avoiding payment of his debts. For Wych's anger, see PRO SP97/15 f. 126 Wych to Dorchester, 30 Sept. 1631; see also Cornelius Haga's [Dutch ambassador's] account to Roe, *ibid* f. 119, 10/20 Aug. 1631.

ambassador.¹ These measures mirrored registration of contracts in the local *Kadı*'s courts and enabled ambassadors to verify trade deals for themselves.² Arbitration of disputes was easier and ambassadors had solid evidence and precedents if they needed to take cases to the Ottoman authorities.³

Local merchants were understandably disinclined to accept registration of their contracts by the English ambassador because it forced them to pay in foreign currency. Jewish merchants, who regularly did business with the English, were reluctant to comply but Roe was not prepared to allow them to pay in Ottoman currency as its instability made the English suffer exchange loss. He negotiated with them in July 1624, threatening to forbid transactions with them unless they agreed to his terms.⁴ He conceded that transactions would be made at the official exchange rate at eighty aspers per dollar, in return for their compliance, although this rate did not operate for long.⁵

In order to maintain this arrangement, Roe had to be seen to apply it fairly to both

1 This was found to be too restrictive and was changed to apply only to amounts of 600 dollars and above. See PRO SP105/102 ff. 163-4 *Company Court* at Constantinople, 28 July, 1624.

2 An Ottoman written deed was known as a *hüccet*. It was a proof of a business transaction sold and prepared by the *Kadı* as a proof of the deal: See N.H. Biegmann: The Turco-Ragusan Relationship (The Hague, 1967) p. 9. Ambassadors decided to keep their own records because they needed to keep several proofs of transactions and discharge of payments to prevent their merchants being charged with unpaid debts. The French ambassador, Philippe de Harlay, Comte de Césy, found himself in trouble with the Porte in February 1634/5 even though he produced a discharge document when accused of a ten year old debt by an Armenian client. See PRO SP97/16 f. 7 Wych to Secretary of State, 26 Feb. 1635.

3 The merchants' acceptance of this practice is clear from the numerous registration documents in Roe's register (PRO SP105/102).

4 The role of the Jewish community in Ottoman trade is a disputed subject. Western sources speak of Ottoman Jews mainly as brokers, (e.g. George Sandys in *Purchas VIII* p. 172; William Biddulph in *Ibid* p. 272). Gerber's studies of the relevant Jewish responsa records suggests that Ottoman Jews had a greater role as merchants in their own right. This is supported by contracts recorded in Levant Company registers (e.g. PRO SP105/102) and research by Eliezer Bashan. See Haim Gerber: 'Jews and Money Lending in the Ottoman Empire' Jewish Quarterly Review 72 (1981) pp. 100-18; Eliezer Bashan: 'Contacts Between Jews in Smyrna and the Levant Company of London in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries' Transactions Jewish Historical Society of England 24 (1987) pp. 53-72; 'Jewish Money-Lending in Constantinople and Smyrna in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries as Reflected in the British Levant Company's Archives' in A. Toaff & Simon Schwarzfuchs: The Mediterranean and the Jews (Bar-Ilan University Press, Israel, 1989) pp. 57-75.

5 PRO SP105/102 ff. 163-4 *Company Court* at Constantinople, 28 Jul. 1624

Ottoman and English merchants. This meant that when an English merchant, John White, contravened the new regulations by registering his contract with a Jewish merchant before an Ottoman witness instead of the ambassador, he had to be suitably punished. Roe acted swiftly after complaints from the Jewish merchants and placed White under house arrest, pending further inquiries and on proving his guilt, fined him one hundred dollars.¹

This direct management of the English community in Constantinople, the negotiation of agreements with local Ottoman merchants and the rapid settlement of cases involving the Ottoman authorities was only possible because the ambassador himself was involved at every level. The protection of the English communities at Smyrna and Aleppo was more problematic because it was more difficult to regulate the merchants and to ensure that local officials upheld the capitulations.

Nevertheless, despite these complications, successive English ambassadors successfully handled merchant problems in Smyrna and Aleppo. They were generally supported by the Ottoman authorities at the Porte in their attempts to maintain the capitulations at a local level.

2) Smyrna and the Morea

Smyrna was, from the early seventeenth century, rapidly becoming the main commercial city for English merchants. The town was taking over the functions of Aleppo as a commercial entrepôt and the merchant community was outgrowing that of Constantinople.² By 1626, Roe considered that 'much of our trade depends on Scio (Chios) and Smyrna.'³ Merchants were attracted by the town's easy access to the trade of the Aegean Islands and the trans-Anatolian routes. There was, however, a more subtle attraction for merchants. They were close enough to Constantinople to communicate with the ambassador rapidly and benefit from the swift resolution of problems which he could usually secure. At the same time, the merchants were

¹ PRO SP105/102 ff. 163-4 *Company Court* at Constantinople, 28 Jul. 1624

² For the development of Smyrna (Izmir), see Daniel Goffman: Izmir and the Levantine World 1550-1650 (University of Washington Press, 1990).

³ Negs. pp. 512-13 Roe to Isaac Wake, Company agent at Venice, 8 May 1625/6

far enough from the Ottoman capital not to suffer any immediate backlash from the Ottoman authorities or to find themselves under the personal regulation of the ambassador.

They were often able to pursue a less restricted trade than their counterparts in Constantinople. This caused conflict with local Ottoman officials who considered that merchants were flouting their already extensive privileges. It also created tension with the ambassador in Constantinople, who feared that the Smyrnan merchants would bring down the wrath of the Ottoman authorities on the English community as a whole. From Wych's residence, ambassadors were also aware of the Smyrnan merchants' growing reluctance to contribute to their maintenance and feared that this would be accompanied by resistance to their jurisdiction.¹

In fact, English ambassadors managed to keep a relatively tight rein on Smyrnan activities. Internal merchant disputes, like that of *Read v Lawrence* in 1640, were dealt with by the ambassador, with the cooperation of the Smyrnan community and consul.² In this particular case, Francis Read was unfairly accused of bad trading practice by Richard Lawrence, and complained that he was losing business as a result.³ The ambassador, Sackville Crow, worked closely with the Consul in Smyrna, Edward Stringer to resolve the dispute. Crow himself heard the testimonies of both men, then he employed the consul to examine details of the case and search Lawrence's house in Smyrna for evidence of his claims. Finally, he made a judgement in favour of Read.

In a reflection of the bad relations which had existed between Crow and the Company since his appointment in 1634, the Company complained that his use of the Smyrnan

1 This problem was created by the contested rights of Strangers' Consulage which was accompanied by Company attempts to regulate the merchant communities more directly without informing the Crown of their intentions.

2 For the details of this case, see PRO SP97/16 ff. 241-9 Papers on Case of Francis Reade, Merchant, 27 Jan. 1640.

3 It is possible that this Richard Lawrence is the same merchant who was sent to Constantinople as an interim agent in 1653, pending the arrival of Bendish's anticipated successor, Major Salway. He certainly had the backing of the Company in England during his dispute with Read, but his unpopularity with the Smyrnan merchants would explain his lack of success in his attempts to oust Bendish from the Porte between 1653-6.

merchants to hear evidence in the case amounted to the appointment of an illegal jury. In reply Crow wrote:

'I am by his Majestie's commission, to see all his subjects here, live in order, conformable to the capitulations and his Majesty's lawes.'¹ His response reveals that ambassadors regarded the internal order of community affairs as a factor in the maintenance of the pre-eminence of the English at the Porte.

This concern that disputes should be settled quietly within the merchant community reflects a major problem for ambassadors. Merchants who were too far from the ambassador to have their case heard quickly or who knew they would not receive support from him, took their disputes before local officials. This usually involved considerable expense as officials could often be bribed by one party to make a decision favourable to them and then counter-bribed by the other party to reverse it. Ambassadors considered that this was futile and undermined both the legal channels established in the capitulations and their consular justice. Thomas Roe was particularly vehement on this point, stating that he would not suffer 'to make Turks our judges.'²

In many cases, however, when one disputing merchant took his case to a local court, the other party appealed to the ambassador and the case was transferred to an ambassadorial hearing. The case of *Henry Hide v Giles Ball* in 1645 illustrates this pattern of switching between local and consular justice.

Giles Ball was Henry Hide's successor as Consul of the Morea and their dispute hinged on a series of counter-claims: Ball argued that Hide had been reluctant to hand over his commission and had antagonised the local Ottoman population by buying the appointment of the Voyvode of Patras.³ He was also accused of disrupting trade by encouraging merchants

1 PRO SP97/16 f. 279 Crow to Secretary of State, 28 May 1640

2 PRO SP97/11 f. 94 Roe to Isaac Wake, Company agent at Venice, 24 Sept. 1625.

3 This accusation, which Hide did not deny but claimed was advantageous to the Company, indicates that English officials could buy extra protection for their trade by purchasing local offices. For Hide's defence of this point, see B.L. Egerton MSS. 2541 ff. 307-9 Sackville Crow's Judgement of Case, 19 Jul. 1645.

not to pay their consulage and by dismissing two ships, the 'Talent' and 'Falcon', without licence.¹ Hide countered by arguing that Ball had made himself consul, using his Ottoman *berat*, without waiting for the traditional presentation and public transfer of the commission, thus leaving the merchant community vulnerable to accusations that they lacked full consular protection.² He also claimed that despite clear orders from the Company to Ball to leave the regulation of the trade in currants in Hide's hands, Ball had broken all existing contracts favourable to the English, and drawn up new ones at a substantially higher rate to ingratiate himself with the local population.³

Ball appears to have initiated the case in the *Kadı's* Court after his complaints to the ambassador had failed to elicit any support.⁴ His later petition to Crow suggests that he was keen to protect the office of Consul from encroachment by individual merchants.⁵ Nevertheless, his use of Ottoman justice reduced the strength of his case in the eyes of the ambassador. Hide was more reluctant to use this form of justice and produced several imperial commands addressed to the local *Paşa* and *Kadı*, instructing them to help him on all occasions. These were evidently blanket commands procured by the ambassador which enabled

1 B.L. Egerton MSS. 2541 f. 306 the Humble Complaynt of Gyles Balle, Consul of Morea against the several practices and misdemeanors of Mr Henry Hide. English ships were not supposed to depart from an Ottoman port unless they carried a *hüccet* (proof of legal transaction) from the local *Kadı*. See PRO SP105/102 f.205 William Saltar's Commission to be Consull of Smyrna and Scio. This was to protect ships from charges of smuggling but was unpopular with merchants, especially those whose transactions were not entirely above board: see Ibid f. 206 Court at Constantinople, 5 Apr. 1625.

2 The Ottoman *berat* in this case, was a combination of an order of appointment and a safe-conduct which was drawn up at the request of an ambassador at the Porte for consuls. It was intended to facilitate their reception by Ottoman officials at their destination but was supposed to be presented with the Ambassadorial commission and instructions to emphasise that the appointee was a representative of the English Crown and not subject to Ottoman jurisdiction.

3 The increased amount varies in the course of the trial. The established rate had clearly been one and three quarter dollars per sack and at the hearing of 24 June 1645, Ball was accused of raising it by another eighth per sack and to four dollars per sack at the session on 30 August. See B.L. Egerton MSS. 2541 ff. 300-2; ff. 303-5 Henry Hide of the Morea, Merchant plaintiff versus Gyles Ball of the Morea, Consull defendant.

4 B.L. Egerton MSS. 2541 ff. 318-20 Copy of letter from Ball to Crow, 22 Dec. 1644

5 B.L. Egerton MSS. 2541 f. 306 Petition of Giles Ball, 18 Jun. 1645

a consul to gain the immediate support of local officials when necessary.¹ These seem to have worked because Ball's declarations that they were false failed, as did his appeals to the local authorities for Hide's arrest. Ball was prepared to take the case to the highest level of Ottoman justice, even securing several formal petitions (*arzlar*) from local inhabitants against Hide.

At this point Crow began to take more notice of the case. Ball's independent presentation of petitions concerning the conduct of an English merchant would create a worrying precedent, which could undermine the role and force of ambassadorial petitions. He stepped in to prevent Ball from delivering the petitions and agreed to hear Hide's complaints against Ball in full, summoning both men to the embassy court in Constantinople.²

The final outcome of the case was that Giles Ball was suspended from his commission, pending formal revocation by the King and ordered to pay the costs of Hide's defence.³ It is difficult to tell whether this judgement was entirely fair. Ball seems to have been unduly provoked and, given Hide's later exploits in Constantinople, Hide was probably not as blameless as the judgement suggests.⁴ Moreover, Hide, with his greater experience of how to manipulate local officials through the legal privileges of the capitulations, was able to appear the injured party to both local Ottoman officials and the ambassador alike. It is clear that Crow was influenced in his decision by Ball's recourse to Ottoman justice, considering it 'an apparent contempt of his Majestie's authoritie and royall will.'⁵ The case illustrates that, whenever possible, it was in a merchant's own interests to stay within the bounds of the consular jurisdiction established by the capitulations.

1 B.L. Egerton MSS. 2541 ff. 298-9 Item 5 The Articles of Mee Henry Hide presented to the Cancellaria of the Right Honourable Sir Sackville Crow, 14 Jun. 1645

2 B.L. Egerton MSS. 2541 f. 310 Sackville Crow's Judgement on Costs, 30 Aug. 1645

3 B.L. Egerton MSS. 2541 ff. 303-5 Court Session, 30 Aug. 1645; f. 310 Sackville Crow's Judgement on Costs, 30 Aug. 1645

4 The Company later complained that Hide was in the wrong in the Ball v Hide case, see: PRO SP105/144 f. 2 The Levant Company's Complaint Against Mr. Henry Hide, c.1648, For Hide's attempts to usurp the position of ambassador, see above p. 129 and Daniel Goffman and Mark Charles Fissel: 'Viewing the Scaffold from Istanbul: The Bendysh-Hyde Affair, 1647-51' *Albion* 22 (1990) pp. 421-48.

5 B.L. Egerton MSS. 2541 ff. 303-5 Court Session, 30 Aug. 1645

Even when English merchants had a legitimate claim they could not always achieve a satisfactory result at a local level. In March 1636, when the 'Concord' arrived at Smyrna, it was attacked by a Barbary ship in the bay. When the consul, Barnard, complained to the *Kadı*, he was told that the Barbary ship was beyond local jurisdiction. Barnard accepted this excuse since the English were well aware that Barbary ships acted independently even if technically under Ottoman law. He still hoped to obtain a formal *arz* (petition) from the *Kadı* which would explain the situation to the Ottoman authorities at the Porte. Instead, a few days later an *arz* was produced against the English, alleging that the 'Concord' had fired at the fortified castle of Smyrna.¹ Barnard could take the matter no further at a local level without involving considerable expense and so handed the problem on to the ambassador, Wych, so illustrating that the merchant communities of the Aegean could still look to the ambassador to afford protection through their proximity to Constantinople.

3) Aleppo

For the merchant community in Aleppo, however, direct recourse to the ambassador and the Porte authorities, though preferable, was less practical. Communications between the embassy and the Aleppo consulate were slow and consuls often attempted to deal with urgent matters at a local level. Successive ambassadors made valiant attempts to protect the merchant community at Aleppo but correspondence between ambassadors and Aleppo consuls was tinged with reproach. Ambassadors chided consuls for using local justice rather than petitioning the Porte, while consuls complained of inaction in Constantinople. The root of the problems which Aleppo suffered in the first half of the seventeenth century lay in the lack of direct control which the ambassador had over the implementation of the capitulations at a local level.

Aleppo, though in an ideal trading position at the cross-roads of the Persian silk route to the Gulf of Hormuz and the trans-Caucasus trade route linking the Ottoman Empire with

1 PRO SP97/16 f. 53 Abstract of Letter from Mr. Barnard, Consul at Smyrna, 21 Apr. 1636; see also Goffman: *Izmir* p. 134.

Central Asia, China and India, was in a vulnerable location.¹ Anatolia suffered from frequent regional uprisings, from the Celali rebellions of 1596-1610, to the revolt of Abaza Mehmed Paşa between 1622-8 and a further resurgence between 1644-58 led by Ali Paşa, Ipşir Mustafa Paşa and Abaza Hasan Paşa. These were often centred in the east because it was more inaccessible to state troops. The causes of the rebellions have been disputed, but it is probable that the changing pattern of regional government in the seventeenth century played a major part.² Provincial governors were increasingly expected to recruit local men to enforce the law. However, the tenure of a provincial governor was brief and his forces were not generally taken over by the new official. This had two consequences: men ousted from their jobs as law enforcers turned to banditry themselves or former governors rebelled, at the instigation of their men, to safeguard their jobs.³ In addition, aware of the brevity of tenure, regional Paşas increasingly tried to siphon wealth into their own hands. Aleppo, as an obviously prosperous centre, was a target especially in the 1640s and 1650s.⁴ It also suffered from being a provisions centre during the Baghdad campaign of the 1630s.

Aleppo's problems were not all internal. The wide bay at Iskenderun where merchants unloaded their goods was exposed to incursions by pirates. Its distance from Constantinople made it more difficult for consular officials to enforce customs regulations agreed between the various foreign communities trading in Ottoman territory. It was a disregard for customs

1 See A.H. Lybyer: 'The Ottoman Turks and the Routes of Oriental Trade' E.H.R. 30 (1915) pp. 577-89, p. 578; Andras Riedlmayer: 'Ottoman-Safavid Relations and the Anatolian Trade Routes, 1603-18' TSAB 5 (1981) pp. 7-10; Bruce Masters: *Origins of Western Dominance in the Middle East* (New York, 1988) pp. 18-24.

2 See William J. Griswold: The Great Anatolian Rebellion 1591-1611 (Berlin, 1983) and Ronald C. Jennings: 'Urban Population in Anatolia in the Sixteenth Century: A Study of Kayseri, Karaman, Amasya, Trabzon and Erzurum' IJMES 7 (1976) pp. 21-57.

3 These political and social changes contributed in the decline of overland trade routes to China: see Morris Rossabi: 'The Decline of the Central Asian Caravan Trade' in The Rise of the Merchant Empires: Long Distance trade, 1350-1750 (ed.) James D. Tracy (Cambridge, 1990) pp. 351-70.

4 For an analysis of the various theories on these uprisings, see Suraiya Faroqhi: 'Political Tensions in the Anatolian Countryside Around 1600: An Attempt at Interpretation' in Varia Turcica IX: Türkische Miscellen: Robert Anhegger Festschrift (ed.) Jean Louis Baqué Grammont et al. (Istanbul, 1987) pp. 117-31.

dues which sparked off the first major dispute involving the English community at Aleppo. Like many of the cases involving the merchant community in Constantinople, conflict arose not between the Ottoman community and the merchants but between two merchant communities, in this instance the English and Venetians.

The cause of the dispute was the arrival of the English ship 'Saint Peter and Andrew' in Aleppo in the autumn of 1625. Although captained by an English master, Nathaniel Goodlade, it carried Venetian goods and was therefore liable to pay Strangers' Consulage to the English community.¹ Having used the English flag on the journey, it entered Aleppo under the Venetian flag, so it could claim exemption as a Venetian ship. The purser, who refused either to hand over cargo records or pay the dues, was protected by the Venetian consul.²

At this point, the case was taken up by the *Kadı*'s court, probably at the instigation of the English consul, Edward Kirkham. At the court, the Venetian consul produced a document claiming 'to discharge their nation of any duty of the English.'³ Roe considered this obsolete but when the Venetian consul added a bribe it was enough to win him the case. Both sides continued to bribe and counter-bribe the *Kadı* but he stood by his first decision.⁴

Roe was concerned by the implications of this case. Firstly there was the issue of setting a precedent by allowing Ottoman justice to judge a dispute between two capitulatory nations. He recognised that

'wee can plead no capitulations to the Grand Signor against Christians (not his vassalls), thereby to insinuate a powre in the Turke to lay any imposition upon their goods which would bee scandalous in the present and dangerous in the

1 For Strangers Consulage see above, p. 93 ff. Both the Venetians and the French had paid Strangers Consulage to the English without dispute from at least the beginning of Roe's residence: see PRO SP97/11 f. 139 Roe to Wilkinson, agent in Venice, 4 Nov. 1625; Goffman: *Izmir* pp. 99-101. Roe also gained the right to collect it from the Dutch during his residence: See PRO SP105/102 f. 63; ff. 112-3.

2 The full details of this case can be found in *Negs.* pp. 446-52 Roe to Lords of Council, 2/12 Nov. 1625.

3 *Negs.* p. 448 Roe to Lords of Council, 2/12 Nov. 1625

4 PRO SP97/11 f. 139 Roe to Wilkinson, 4 Nov. 1625: Roe believed that approximately 8,000 dollars had been spent by the English and Venetian merchants in Aleppo.

future.’¹

His first efforts were therefore to appeal to Murad IV to overturn the decision of the Aleppo court, and return the issue to arbitration by himself and the Venetian bailo. He succeeded in suspending the proceedings in the Ottoman justice system, but the Bailo refused to take on the case, pleading that it was beyond his brief.²

Both Roe and the Venetian bailo held Edward Kirkham responsible for taking the case to the local Court. Roe, however, accepted that he had done so only because the Venetian consul refused to take the matter to the English and Venetian ambassadors for arbitration.³ The Venetian Senate continued to press the fault of the English consul, instructing their ambassador in England to request his punishment. In response to this, Roe, though not condoning his consul’s actions, produced evidence to prove that the Venetian consul at Aleppo had also sought justice in the local Ottoman court in the past.⁴

Roe’s attempts to claim mitigating circumstances had a clear aim. He did not want recriminations over using local justice to cloud what he considered to be the main issues of the dispute. These were the English community’s right to collect consulage from English ships freighting Venetian goods and to prevent improper use of the English flag as a flag of convenience. Although this matter did not directly affect Anglo-Ottoman relations, Roe could see that it could have future ramifications for the English communities in the Ottoman Empire.

Roe’s recognised that increasing numbers of ships were switching between flags to avoid danger and dues. He was concerned that this would damage the English reputation. More importantly if the English flag was used as cover not just for foreign goods but for attacks on other Mediterranean traffic, the Barbary states could justifiably claim that the English had

1 Negs. pp. 448-52 Roe to Lords of Council, 2/12 Nov. 1625

2 PRO SP97/11 f. 110 Roe to Cornelius Haga, 4 Oct. 1625; f. 139 Roe to Wilkinson, 4 Nov. 1625

3 Negs. p. 481 Roe to Wilkinson, agent in Venice, 26 Dec. 1625

4 Negs. p. 488-9 Roe to Wilkinson, 25 Feb. 1625/6

breached the capitulations which Roe had recently extended to cover shipping conduct. These stated that English ships and those of the Barbary States would not attack one another.¹ His anxiety proved justified when an English ship, freighting Venetian goods and carrying Venetian passengers, attacked the ship of the Bey of the Morea the following spring.²

Furthermore, if the Venetians succeeded in avoiding payment of Strangers' Consulage to the English once they would do it again.³ In March 1627, Roe complained that the Venetians were beginning to take advantage generally over rights of consulage because the Venetian Senate and English Crown had failed to resolve the Aleppo dispute.⁴ Roe had no doubt that the French would be quick to follow the Venetian example. This would not only reduce the standing of the English among the trading communities but could also diminish their status with the Porte.⁵ One of the main functions of the consulage was to supply ready funds to cover the expenses of negotiations at the Porte. Any reduction could contribute to a reduction in the purchasing power and influence of English ambassadors.

Negotiations between Venice and England to resolve this dispute took place beyond the Porte, and although Roe continued to take an active interest in them, they were beyond his sphere of control. Although the dispute continued beyond his residence, the English authorities did respond to his warnings in 1627 with an act which decreed that the English should continue to collect Strangers' Consulage and that English ships should fly the flag of

¹ See below, p. 191 ff.

² Roe complained that 'they use our shipps, with St. Marke in the topp, to deceive us of our right but committ disorders under St. George, as a soldiour better able, they think, to beare it out.' *Negs.* pp. 494-5 Extract of Letter to Isaac Wake, 25 Mar. 1625/6.

³ Roe warned Cornelius Haga, the Dutch Ambassador, that the decision of the Aleppo *Kadı* also exempted the Venetians from paying consulage to the Dutch. PRO SP97/11 f. 110 Roe to Haga, 4 Oct. 1625.

⁴ *Negs.* p. 625 Roe to Privy Council, 17/27 Mar. 1626/7

⁵ Roe's fears proved unfounded in this respect since it appears that the English consul at Aleppo won the right from the Porte to collect Strangers' Consulage from Ottoman Muslims and zimmi who transported their cargoes in English ships. See Bruce Masters: 'Trading Diasporas and "Nations": The Genesis of National Identities in Ottoman Aleppo' *International Historical Review* 9 (1987) pp. 345-65, p. 363.

Saint George at all times.¹

In his work to redeem the situation for the English community in Aleppo, Roe recognised that only by using the traditional path of petitions to the Porte could the central Ottoman adherence to the capitulations be implemented at a local level in Aleppo. Despite his best efforts, English consuls there continued to seek rapid remedies from the local justice system. Nevertheless, Roe was sure that the amount of local interference in the merchant community could be minimised by an ambassador's rapid intervention and the cooperation of the Porte. The extent to which this policy worked was proved soon after Roe's successor, Wych, arrived at the Porte.

The problems of the English community in Aleppo in the 1630s were sparked off by an incident of piracy involving the notorious Kenelm Digby at Scanderoon (Iskenderun).² In June 1628, when prevented from attacking several French ships in the harbour by a Venetian trading fleet, Digby turned on the latter and then ransacked the French ships. The incident was of no great naval importance but for the merchant community in Aleppo it heralded another attempt by the Venetians and French to win trade at the expense of the English.

Digby's action was in clear contravention of the capitulations which stated that ships must conduct themselves peacefully within Ottoman waters. In response to this, the local authorities imprisoned the English consul, Thomas Potton and placed the English merchant community under house arrest.³ This was also a breach of the capitulations, which stated that matters involving the capitulations were to be resolved by the sultan. It highlights the ambiguous nature of consular immunity and the confusion of local officers about the nature of the capitulations.

1 PRO SP97/13 f. 262 King's Declaration on Consulage and Flag of St. George and St. Andrew, 16 Nov. 1627. It remained in force during Wych's residence, see PRO SP97/14 f. 29 Instructions for John Wandesford, Consul at Aleppo, 12 Apr. 1630.

2 For the background to these events see Kenneth R. Andrews: 'Digby at Scanderoon' in *Ships, Money and Politics* (Cambridge, 1991) pp. 106-127; for Digby's own justification see his letter to Wych in PRO SP97/14 f. 154, 14 Jun. 1628 and his *Private Memoirs* (London, 1827) pp. 316-9.

3 PRO SP97/14 f.164 Thomas Potton to Wych, 25 Jun. 1628

The Venetian consul appealed to the local Ottoman authorities, seeking to force the English to compensate them for the losses which Digby had inflicted. Potton, perhaps wary of the trap into which the English had fallen in the 1625 dispute, immediately wrote to Wych, requesting help from the divan.

Wych rapidly appealed to the Grand Vizier, pleading the capitulations.¹ He emphasised the threat to trade which the disruption of the English community in Aleppo could bring and played down Digby's action.² This was designed to draw attention to the fact that what was most important was not whether Digby had acted correctly, but that the local authorities had acted illegally and that the case, as one concerning the capitulations, should be brought before the divan.

This reasoning was supported by the Grand Vizier who dispatched a *ferman* to the *Kadı* of Aleppo, reminding him of the English community's status under the capitulations. The *ferman* noted that the English had fought with the Venetians and French and instructed that the merchants should be freed and left to trade freely according to the capitulations.³ Most importantly it decreed that the case should be heard at the Porte.

This was at least a temporary victory for Wych and would win a breathing space for the merchant community in Aleppo. Once the case came to the Porte, Wych recognised that the French and Venetians would be quick to involve themselves but was confident of justifying Digby's actions. His intentions were thwarted by the consul's desperation. He made a local settlement of fifty thousand dollars without waiting to find out whether Wych had succeeded at the Porte.⁴ Wych was understandably angry because, like Roe before him, he

1 Wych presented this case before he was officially received by Murad IV since his dispatch reporting it was dated 12 July: see PRO SP97/14 f. 189 Wych to Secretary Conway, 12 Jul. 1628. His audience with the Sultan took place on 13 July 1628: see PRO SP97/14 f. 204, so it is possible that Wych used the Vizier's audience, the usual prelude to that of the sultan to make his case for Aleppo.

2 Wych had only the brief letter from the consul at Aleppo to base his report on but claimed that Digby had been intending to provision his ships at Iskenderun and only responded to an attack by the French ships: see PRO SP97/14 f. 189 Wych to Secretary Conway, 12 Jul. 1628.

3 See Italian translation of Vizier's *ferman*, dated A.H. 1037: PRO SP97/14 f. 185

4 PRO SP97/14 f. 204 Wych to Secretary Conway, 26 Jul. 1628

felt that the intercessionary power of the capitulations was weakened by such local deals.

Wych was keen to reverse this setback and quickly obtained a second set of imperial commands including a *hatt-i hümayun* 'which is the most powerful and peremptory that can be procured' securing its delivery by imperial messengers.¹ These were briefed to assess the situation and to gain restitution of the fine paid to the local officials.²

Wych's brief account of his actions belies the considerable diplomatic activity which went into the securing of such documents. It is a measure both of his predecessor's influence at the Porte and of the status of the English at the Porte in general that Wych was so successful so early on in his residence.

Although Wych had understated Digby's role in the incident in his audience with the Grand Vizier, he was privately furious with him. He complained about his actions to the Secretary Conway.³ He was supported by his predecessor Roe, who had been on his journey back from Turkey when the Digby incident occurred. Roe showed his continuing concern for the protection of merchants in the region, obtaining an act of state by royal order:

'that no more letters of mart shalbe granted within the streights [i.e. in the Mediterranean] according to the example of the buon governo of Queen Elizabeth'⁴

This made expeditions such as Digby's less likely in the future. It also allowed Wych to treat any such cases as acts of piracy. This provided English merchants with a measure of protection since the Porte, though vehement in its complaints about English piracy, generally accepted that the merchant community was not responsible. With this combination of Porte instructions and English directives, Wych reinforced his position at the Porte.

Nevertheless, Wych's strength at the Porte was not mirrored in Aleppo and although

1 Italian translations of these can be found in PRO SP97/14 f.216; 218.

2 Inferred from Wych's dispatch to Conway of 4 Oct. 1628 in PRO SP97/14 f. 226 which notes the arrival of the messengers in Aleppo.

3 PRO SP97/14 f. 204 Wych to Conway, 26 Jul. 1628: Wych also admitted that Digby had acted illegally against the Venetians although he continued to support Digby in public: see CSPV 1629-32 p. 71 Sebastiano Veniero to Doge and Senate, 26 May 1629.

4 PRO SP97/14 f. 280 [Roe] to Wych, 12 Jun. 1629

the imperial commands arrived in time to prevent further fines against the English, they could not restore merchant confidence entirely. Wych reported that several merchants had left the entrepôt, while those that remained were demoralised and 'doe not passe their busyness with that confidence and alacrity they were accustomed.'¹

Merchant fears about repercussions from the Digby affair proved justified the following autumn when the Grand Vizier, Husrev Paşa, arrived in Aleppo on his way to campaign against the Safavids. Several local inhabitants presented a petition, claiming that Digby had carried off some of their number in his attack. The Vizier passed judgement against the English, executed their dragoman and imprisoned the consul. On this occasion, the French consul intervened on behalf of the English consul, preventing the Vizier from executing him. Eventually, the English managed to persuade the Vizier that they were innocent of the crime and he promised that if they could prove their case, he would review it on his return from Baghdad that winter.²

The English consul believed that the initial petition had been orchestrated by the Venetians who continued to press for the removal of the English from Aleppo. What was more worrying, however, was the arbitrary justice practised by the Vizier. Consuls were clearly not afforded even the limited immunity granted to ambassadors. Moreover, once a state official left the formalised patterns of justice practised by the Porte, he appeared to abandon the conventions of the capitulations.

The continuing deterioration of the position of the English at Aleppo did not go unnoticed in England. When John Wandesford was sent to replace Thomas Potton in April 1630, he carried letters from Charles I to Murad IV, pleading the merchants' case on the issue of Strangers' Consulage and on the more recent repercussions of the Digby case.³ However,

1 PRO SP97/14 f. 226 Wych to Secretary Conway, 4 Oct. 1628

2 PRO SP97/14 f. 331 Thomas Potton, Consul at Aleppo to Wych, 17 Oct. 1629

3 PRO SP97/15 f. 29 Instructions for John Wandesford, Consul at Aleppo, 12 Apr. 1630: Wandesford's instructions ordered him to resolve any disputes with the French and Venetians amongst themselves: this was clearly a reinforcement of ambassadorial attempts to keep such disputes out of the local justice system.

Wych was forced to delay presentation of the letters because the merchants at Aleppo feared reprisals from the Vizier, who was still in the region, if complaints against him were presented at the Porte.¹ In fact, the situation in Aleppo, while not improving, did not deteriorate further, because the Vizier was forced to concentrate on the arduous Baghdad campaign.

Aleppo began to move down Wych's list of priorities as more pressing problems in Constantinople preoccupied him.² By 1636, the problems of the Aleppo merchants did not even feature in the list of grievances which Wych's designated successor, Sackville Crow, was expected to present at his audience with the sultan.³ The truth was that Aleppo's problems had helped her decline and both Company and Crown were increasingly occupied first with problems in the Aegean and then, in the 1640s, with the domestic crisis in England. Aleppo was left to suffer in silence until these broader problems, and the internal quarrels between the Company and the ambassador at the Porte had died down and Thomas Bendish had replaced Crow as ambassador.

The first indications of further trouble in Aleppo came in a dispatch to Bendish from Henry Riley, then consul, in May 1652. He complained that local officials were contravening the capitulations and that the English merchants were once again being mistreated.⁴ In reality, these events were a magnification of the phenomenon which the Aleppo merchants had experienced in 1629: the abuse of power by public figures beyond the control of the Porte.

In this instance, the man in question was İpşir Paşa, who had been Murad IV's master of the horse in the Revan (Yerevan) Campaign of 1635 and was later appointed governor of Kütahya.⁵ İpşir Paşa had joined forces with Kara Hasan Ağa to win back for the latter the

1 PRO SP97/15 f. 53 Wych to [Secretary Dorchester], 15 Oct. 1630

2 See above, p. 143 ff. and below, p. 222.

3 The Aleppo question is absent from PRO SP97/15 f. 105 Request of Levant Company for Articles to be Inserted in Instructions to Crow, 1636.

4 PRO SP97/17 f. 80 Riley to Bendish, 3 May 1652

5 See Intimate Life of An Ottoman Statesman: Robert Dankoff (State University of New York Press, 1991) p. 52

position of Turcoman Ağa.¹ Eventually, he was appointed Governor of Aleppo in an attempt to pacify him and embarked upon what the English community regarded as a regime of tyranny, demanding large sums from the community. It is not clear whether İpşir Paşa was simply more zealous than his predecessors in collecting dues or whether his demands were for new dues but the English community considered them in breach of the capitulations.

The consul made no attempt to resolve the problems in the local justice system as it was clear that İpşir Paşa was beyond its jurisdiction. He rapidly handed over the problem to Bendish, and even when dissatisfied with the ambassador's apparent lack of action, took his complaints to the Council of State.² This suggests that the Aleppo community had at last accepted that the ambassadorial petition system, though imperfect was the only hope of resolving their problems.

This latest problem for the Aleppo community posed a particular challenge for Bendish. Just as Wych had withheld the King's letter from Murad IV in the interests of merchant safety in 1629, so Bendish had to tread carefully over İpşir Paşa's transgressions. He realised that openly attacking İpşir Paşa would endanger the English in Aleppo but secured promises from the Grand Vizier of 'as much justice as I could in this case possibly expect.'³ The Grand Vizier was aware of İpşir Paşa's power but worked out a way of dealing with the problem without arousing him. He sent an imperial command to İpşir Paşa and the *Kadı*, blaming the 'customer' and desiring them to force him to make restitution. This was a valient attempt to satisfy the English while preventing further trouble from İpşir Paşa.

Bendish had secured this action only two months after Riley had petitioned him with the problem. Despite this, on the 19 June and again on 24 July, Henry Riley complained to the Council of State that the ambassador was not capable of handling the problem. This highlights a new problem in relations between the ambassador and the community in Aleppo.

1 According to Evliya Çelebi, Kara Hasan Ağa had been granted the post for life after capturing and executing a rebel, Kara Haydar-oğlu. Hasan Ağa had lost through a palace conspiracy led by Bektaş Ağa. See Dankoff: *Intimate Life* pp. 62-4.

2 See PRO SP97/17 f. 99 Riley to Frost, Secretary of Council of State, 24 Jul. 1652

3 PRO SP97/17 f. 95 Bendish to Council of State, 13 Jul. 1652

Riley noted:

'my experience hath taught mee the great difference betweene this and other places in Turkey, where I have formerly conversed, in respect of the palpable injustice soe commonly practised here...principally in respect of our farr distance (neere 600 miles) from the Imperiall Port.'¹

While he recognised the problems of distance, Riley still expected swift action from the ambassador. Successive ambassadors had succeeded in persuading the Aleppo community to channel complaints through them and this resulted in raised expectations within the community. When they acted correctly and appealed through the ambassador, they expected a rapid reaction. In the turbulent years of the early 1650s, such expectations were unrealistic.

The Aleppo community continued to complain about İpşir Paşa but though Bendish secured promises on individual actions, such as the seizing of an Aleppo caravan in May 1654, there was little more he could do than secure instructions from the Grand Vizier to remedy the situation.² When İpşir Paşa became Grand Vizier in October 1654, Bendish's channel of appeal was completely sealed. He was also unsure about his own position as the Commonwealth authorities were still trying to persuade their appointee, Richard Salway, to depart for the Porte. This marked the climax of the crisis for Bendish and the Aleppo community.

When İpşir Paşa was replaced as Grand Vizier by Murad Paşa in May 1655, the situation in Aleppo improved slightly. That September saw Bendish's unofficial reappointment as ambassador and a recovery in English trade at Aleppo.³ Nevertheless, Aleppo's problems were not over and the community was soon suffering from the rebellion of Seydi Ahmet Paşa. Although Bendish was sympathetic to their plight, he was forced to recognise that the community's grievances were no longer issues which could be dealt with under the terms of the capitulations. Their difficulties were inextricably linked with the instability at the Porte

1 PRO SP97/17 f. 99 Riley to Frost, Secretary of Council of State, 24 Jul. 1652

2 ERO D/DHf 04 Sir Thomas Bendish's Diary, entries for 16 and 17 May, 1654. Derviş Mehmed Paşa was Grand Vizier from 21 March 1653–28 October 1654, when İpşir Paşa himself was appointed Grand Vizier.

3 CSPD 1655 p. 336 Levant Company to Bendish; Ibid to Henry Riley, 17 Sept. 1655

and the establishment of rebel factions in regional power-bases. With the failure of Murad Paşa's army to defeat the rebels, the Porte temporarily lost all credibility of control in the region. Imperial control was re-established in 1656 with the dispersal of rebel Paşas to appointments far from their power bases but even after this, the Aleppo community continued to suffer from exploitative Paşas, in particular, Abaza Hasan Paşa from 1657-8.¹ Bendish was forced to accept that, despite his own efforts and those of his predecessors, an ambassador could not ensure the protection of the merchant community in Aleppo. The town was simply too far from an ambassador's direct control and more importantly, increasingly beyond that of the Porte.

The case of Aleppo proves the exception in the generally successful ambassadorial protection of the merchant communities. Its main vulnerability was its distance from the influence of the ambassador and the Porte. In Constantinople and Smyrna where the ambassador could supervise the communities more effectively and where the Porte exerted direct control, the picture was a much happier one.

Despite the continual tensions over the capitulations, produced by the differing interpretations which each side placed on them, the Porte generally attempted to resolve genuine petitions. The events of 1611-13 and that of 1634 were the exception rather than the rule in Anglo-Ottoman relations and can be ascribed to personal campaigns in the first case by the Grand Vizier and in the second by Murad IV.

The English were fairly treated by the Porte, at least in comparison with the other foreign communities, which is the only real yardstick available to measure their status at the Porte. The English benefitted from the dual nature of the ambassador as Company representative as well as Crown envoy. His ability to regulate trade enabled him to actively promote the protection of the communities rather than merely reacting to Ottoman policy.

The cases described above paint a rather different picture of relations with the Porte than that of the ambassadors resident in Constantinople. Their expectations of diplomatic

1 Thurloe VII p. 439 Bendish to Thurloe, 14 Oct. 1658

immunity, developed on Grotius' model, were disappointed at the Porte. Although cases were often successfully resolved, they were presented in an air of tension which ambassadors could never completely dispel in their reports. The unilateral diplomacy of the Porte had a long way to go before it was transformed into the multilateral model of the West.

THE MEDITERRANEAN ZONE

CHAPTER VII. ACHIEVING DIPLOMATIC SECURITY

The second function of an ambassador was to safeguard the interests of English shipping, nationals and goods in the Mediterranean. It took up a considerable amount of embassy time, administrative work and resources throughout the seventeenth century. Despite the problems inherent in negotiations over the security of shipping lanes, English diplomats not only managed to secure very generous agreements with the Porte but also successfully executed a policy of damage limitation, salvaging the English reputation and, more importantly, preserving and extending the flourishing English trade in the Levant throughout the idiosyncracies of Stuart foreign policy and Cromwell's expansionist policy in the region.

The first problem lay in the Crown's division of diplomatic responsibility in the Mediterranean. The English ambassador in Constantinople was not technically in control of the whole Mediterranean region. His diplomatic role was shared with the English representative in Venice and, on occasion, with English delegations in Madrid. In practice, the continuous diplomatic presence at Constantinople, and the problem of Muslim threats to the security of English ships in the area left the English ambassador to the Porte with responsibility for presenting all complaints from the Crown to the sultan about Muslim abuses in the Mediterranean, from the Straits of Gibraltar to the eastern borders the Ottoman Empire itself. He also had the unwelcome task of fielding complaints from the Ottoman Barbary vassals and from other Western nations competing for the Levantine trade.

Another complication was the gulf in perception of the Mediterranean situation between the English Crown and the Ottoman Porte. The English Crown formed its impression of the problem from the numerous petitions brought to it by the trading companies, merchants and ship-owners who had lost ships and cargo and from relatives of English nationals captured in piracy. This led the Crown to adopt a policy which did not differentiate between Muslim regions but considered them all Ottoman subjects and answerable to the Porte. In English eyes, the term

'Barbary Pirates' covered any Muslim vessel. In fact, the Barbary pirates operated only from Libya, Algeria and Tunisia and generally operated a strict privateering code, similar to that observed by English privateers.¹ English ships, as allies of the Porte, were as likely to be taken by Moroccan 'Sallee' rovers or independent Western pirate ships as by the Barbary pirates themselves. It was a fine distinction but an important one since many of the English complaints to the Porte blamed it for matters beyond its control.

The same inaccuracy of description coloured the Porte's view. Ships which flew the English flag were labelled as English although, increasingly in the seventeenth century, other Western nations used the English flag as one of convenience, recognising that it offered more protection than their own.

The Ottomans did not always differentiate between the largely well-behaved ships of the Levant Company, who depended too much on the security of the region to challenge it with acts of piracy, and the independent ships: '*interlopers*', privateers and pirates who were quick to seize the chance of taking an Ottoman prize if the opportunity presented itself.

The Porte also listened to the complaints of the French and Venetians, who were not averse to exaggerating English activity with the dual purpose of covering indiscretions by their own nationals and bolstering their trade at the expense of the more commercially successful English.

The ambiguity of English policy towards Spain further complicated negotiations with the Porte. In the first years of the English embassy at Constantinople, the English were respected as stable allies against Spain. After the Anglo-Spanish Treaty of 1604, the Porte became concerned about the alignment of the English. As Pindar (1612-20) reported to Carleton in September 1613, the reputation which the English had possessed when they were at war with Spain, 'for lacke of

¹ For the organisation and activities of the Barbary Pirates, see Peter Earle: The Corsairs of Malta and Barbary (London, 1970), pp. 23-97.

use is now worne out of memorie with them.’¹

Ottoman suspicion increased as the actions of English privateers spread from the Western Mediterranean, where they had attacked Spanish ships, to the Eastern Mediterranean and Muslim victims. There was a grey area between licenced privateering, which operated ostensibly only in war against enemies of the state, and pure piracy. The English Crown, although assiduous in its calls for ending piracy in English waters, was less conscientious in the Mediterranean, despite regular proclamations limiting piracy by decreeing ‘no armed vessel to enter the Straits or Mediterranean Sea; nor to sell anything taken in Argier, Tunis, Zant, Petrassé, Barbarie, Greece or Italie’.²

In part, the Crown’s inability to act reflected the lack of a fully developed state navy responsible for the Mediterranean sphere. The Crown depended heavily on merchant shipping as support for its own ships in the case of war and did not want to lose this armed auxiliary fleet in return for more expensive naval commitments in the Mediterranean.

The Crown preferred to leave merchants to organise their own regional defence although in cases of extreme provocation the Crown would sponsor short-term expeditions against the Barbary states. These were usually undermanned and underfunded and took place after little or no consultation with English diplomatic representatives. What general system of naval security there was, was riddled with corruption, as Cecil’s involvement in plundering expeditions in the Eastern Mediterranean highlights.³ The English ambassador in Constantinople was left with the task of pacifying the Ottoman authorities. In the early years when the English position was vulnerable, damage limitation exercises could be arduous and expensive.

There was, however, a more pervasive and serious ambiguity in English policy in the

1 PRO SP97/7 f. 51 Pindar to Carleton, 3 Sept. 1613

2 Paul L. Hughes & James F. Larkin (Eds.): *Tudor Royal Proclamations* (London, 1969), III pp. 238–41 no. 813 Ordering Execution of Articles Against Piracy, 20 Mar. 1602

3 See Kenneth R. Andrews: ‘Sir Robert Cecil and Mediterranean Plunder’ *EHR* 87 (1972) pp. 513–32

region. This was the division between England's political enemies, generally the Spanish, and her ideological enemy, the Muslim Ottomans. The granting of privateering licences related to political enemies, and on those grounds, Ottoman and, after agreements in the 1620s, Barbary ships should have been immune from attack. A proclamation of 3 February 1591 laid out the rules of engagement, stating that anyone:

'that shall knowingly take any ship belonging to any subjects of her friends and allies and doth not forbear to keep them, or takes out of them any goods shall be reputed and tried as a pirate and receive the due punishment for piracy.'¹

In fact, taking a Muslim ship was considered just as much a success as a Spanish prize, and often had the tacit approval of the English Crown. If it was difficult to stop English pirates sacking Spanish ships in peace-time, because of the animosity engrained in the English, it was almost impossible to prevent a convenient variation of the so-called 'just war' taking place on Muslim shipping in the Eastern Mediterranean.²

The Crown's acceptance of the ideological incompatibility of Christian and Muslim states made them reluctant to negotiate formal diplomatic agreements covering security in the Mediterranean in the early years of diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire. Until this stance was altered, the English ambassador could only deal with isolated cases as they arose and lacked the security of a general agreement operating for the Mediterranean. Once diplomats succeeded in partially thawing James I's coldness towards the Porte, the embassy was more successful in dealing with problems in the Mediterranean, despite continued breaches by both sides. In fact, it was the continuous development of a successful regional security policy, in conjunction with improved trading relations, which raised the English to the status of major trading nation in the Levant.

1 Hughes & Larkin: Proclamations, III pp. 100-101 no. 743 Ordering Declaration of Prize Goods Under Penalty of Piracy, 8 Jan. 1592: The Porte issued similar instructions to its vassal states: See Hakluyt, V p. 275 for the Sultan's command to the Barbary States in 1584.

2 For English animosity towards Spain, see Thomas Cogswell: 'England and the Spanish Match' in Conflict in Early Stuart England (eds.) Richard Cust & Ann Hughes (London, 1989) pp. 107-33, 111-14; William S. Maltby: The Black Legend in England (Durham N.C., 1968)

Establishing Security in the Mediterranean

As the Levant trade became increasingly important to England, merchants' clamours for action over security in the Mediterranean received more attention.¹ There was little the Crown itself could do, as its efforts focused on the criminality of piracy, with unenforceable proclamations. Military action was usually only a policy of last resort and had ambitions out of proportion with funding.

Mansell's expedition from November 1620 to July 1621 had been designed to restore the numerous English ships captured by pirates and to destroy the fleet at Algiers to prevent further raids. It had failed completely, showing that large-scale action in the Mediterranean was beyond the Crown's military capability.

Attempts to fund patrolling fleets also ran into problems. Prior to Charles I's attempts in the 1630s to levy a national tax to supply the navy, funds were drawn from the trading companies directly affected by piracy. The Company was keen to see military action in the region but was less willing to take ships out of commercial service or foot the bill. Contributions towards patrolling expeditions were collected slowly. In a notice to the Council of 28 April 1619 the Levant merchants had consented to be ready at a month's notice with a contribution of 8,500 sterling, as agreed on 25 April 1619. By October 1621, However, both the Spanish and Turkey Companies, which were chiefly affected by pirate action in the Mediterranean, were 6,000 sterling in arrears and the Company was forced to take up loans to furnish their quota of the payment.²

Diplomatic exchanges between the Porte and the English Crown dealt with specific cases of piracy. There was no code of acceptable shipping behaviour other than the capitulations' vague

1 See CSPD 1603-10 no. 91 p. 469 Sir Thomas Lake to Lord Salisbury 24 Nov. 1608 concerning petition of Levant merchants for ships to suppress pirates at Algiers.

2 See CSPD 1619-23 pp. 40-41 No. 74, 83 Merchants of Levant Company and Other Companies to Council, 25 Apr. 1619; 296 no. 13, 300 no. 44 Thomas Smythe, Thomas Lowe & William Cockayne to Council, 5, 20 Oct. 1621; 298 no. 25 Order in Council, 10 Oct. 1621

assertions of mutual cooperation against enemy ships. Until the second decade of the seventeenth century, both sides viewed piracy as a matter of individual misfortune and one of the risks of Levantine trade.

Two changes occurred in Mediterranean shipping giving the piracy question greater urgency. Western style broadside ships sailing in well organised groups superceded galleys in the navies of the Barbary States, making it more difficult for English ships to avoid attack.¹ At the same time the French and Venetians were struggling to maintain their trading pre-eminence against the rising success of the English and the new threat of independent Dutch trade.² They argued that the Porte let in pirates as it widened its privileges and asserted that the English with their well-armed merchant ships were the prime culprits.

The Porte, as Pindar gloomily reported to Carleton in 1612, 'seemeth so fully resolved we are the occasions of all trouble of the seas and altogether pirats, as I can with no remonstrance remove his opinions.'³ Pindar knew the French were encouraging this view in their agitation for the removal of the English from the Levantine trade. He was also aware that the Porte was taking advantage of the claim to bargain for the withdrawal of the English from their growing trade in the Indian Ocean. While the Ottoman Empire was willing to open its Western ports to foreign traders, it did not want to be bypassed completely by nations establishing direct trade links with the continent of India. However, the Porte did not capitalise on claims of English piracy. In the short-term, English trade in the Levant and the new draperies it provided affected the Porte more directly than English expansion in the Indian Ocean.

1 See G.N. Clark: 'The Barbary Corsairs in the Seventeenth Century' Cambridge History Journal VIII (1944) pp. 21-35, p. 26 and Earle: Corsairs pp. 50-1. Ironically, this technological advance was introduced by English pirates and privateers.

2 During Pindar's residence, English trade was approximately equal to that of the Venetians. By the mid 1630s it had probably grown to twice that of the Venetians and French combined, although the English disputed this assessment. See CSPV 1632-36 p. 236 no. 310 Piero Foscarini, Venetian Bailo at Constantinople to Doge and Senate, 23 Jun. 1634; pp. 266-8 no. 343 Francesco Zonca, Venetian Secretary in England to Doge and Senate 1 Sept. 1634.

3 B.L. Stowe MSS. 173 f. 180 Pindar to Carleton, 14 Oct. 1612

By the 1620s, although the Levant trade continued to flourish, even well-armed merchant ships were increasingly threatened by piracy. English merchants renewed their pressure on the Crown to relieve the security situation in the Mediterranean. Sir Thomas Roe (1622-8) was sent as ambassador to the Porte, with express instructions to deal with the piracy issue. His commission marked a change in Crown policy. While not an outright recognition of the need for diplomatic action, it was a tacit acknowledgement that a solution must be sought from within the region and not purely in military action organised from Whitehall. Roe was an ideal candidate for the task as he was prepared to develop and execute policy as he saw fit. He aimed to reinforce the English position in the Mediterranean and carried this through even when the English Crown vacillated or showed indifference to the issue.

On his journey to Constantinople, he adopted the traditional policy view, echoing his instructions in justifying the use of the Royal fleet, 'for the security of our merchants trade in the Mediterranean sea against that wicked crewe.'¹ Once in the Mediterranean, he saw the damage done by the Barbary pirates. He was concerned that the removal of the Mansell fleet, despite its failure, left shipping vulnerable to attack. He warned that, with the recent departure of the English fleet from the Levant, piracy against English ships was increasing.²

The main problem for merchant fleets was that they were composed of large, slow ships, leaving them open to attack from the smaller, lighter caravals and pinnaces used by pirate fleets. They required an escort of light ships to protect them. The royal fleet, composed of large 'prestigious' ships with offensive strength but lacking manoeuvrability, could not provide such security. The Admiralty did not consider an escort role as its responsibility, so that with the withdrawal of the royal fleet, merchants had to rely on their ships' defences alone.

In his despatches en route for Constantinople, Roe developed a preliminary diagnosis for action. He outlined a three point policy for restoring the security of the Levant which took into

1. Negs. pp. 2-4 Instructions to Roe, 9 Sept. 1621

2. Negs pp. 4-7 Roe to Calvert, Malaga, 18 Nov. 1621

account the other foreign policy concerns of England in the region. At the strategic level he proposed that a fleet comprising ten London ships and ten Spanish ships, with experienced Levant captains, should sweep the Levant, clearing it of pirate vessels. The primary weakness in this was its assumption of active cooperation between Spain and England, which was always difficult to organise. Moreover, a single expedition would not bring long-term security to the region, requiring repeated expeditions to consolidate the initial action. The expense inherent in this plan rendered it impracticable.

At an economic level, England was to complain formally to the French about their trade with the Barbary states and force an economic blockade of the region which would only be lifted on condition of a prohibition of piracy. Roe was over-optimistic about English powers of persuasion when the French already considered their commercial position under threat from English gains in the Mediterranean.

Finally, at a diplomatic level, Roe was to be given greater powers to speak with the sultan and demand that he take action to control his errant vassals.¹ This was the only aspect of his plan which had any hope of success and still required careful handling, given the important strategic value of the Barbary fleet for the Porte.

Roe reassessed his proposals en route, discovering that the communities living on the coasts of the Mediterranean, while prepared to allow an English fleet to patrol the waters, were unwilling or unable to provide neither naval assistance or food for the fleet.² Roe was realistic enough to recognise that his policy needed considerable adjustment.

Once he arrived at the Porte and listened to the embassy staff, Roe realised that the problem was much more complex than he had initially supposed. He recognised that the sultan was so dependent on the Barbary fleets it would be difficult to induce him to punish them. The sultan used ships from Algiers and Tunis in February 1621/2 to support the Ottoman fleet in their

1. Negs. pp. 4-7 Roe to Calvert, 18 Nov. 1621

2. SP97/8 f. 158a Roe to Archbishop Abbot, 29 Apr. 1622

expedition against the rebel Emir of Sidon in Syrian Tripoli.¹ Roe was concerned that the Barbary fleet was not simply an ancillary force but a vital element to bring the otherwise weakened Ottoman fleet up to full strength for an attack on Spain.²

The fleet, however, had higher priorities than attacks on the Western Mediterranean, withdrawing to the Black Sea to deal with Cossack raids and keep vital supply lines open. The Porte also had internal problems with the Janissaries and revolts in Anatolia and Syria. Roe realised that the Porte would not react if the English conducted a campaign against the pirates at this time.³ Roe hoped that the Porte might be more willing to make a gesture of disciplining the Barbary States than it had previously been while conducting an offensive strategy in the Mediterranean.

Roe's first audience with Osman II seemed to confirm his hopes. He reported optimistically to the king that the sultan had promised to control the Algiers and Tunis pirates from attacking English ships. The offer, however, was not as generous as it appeared at first glance. Osman had given concessions on the piracy issue on condition that English merchants, who had withdrawn after the failure of the Mansell expedition, returned to Algiers for the 'assurance of the peace.'⁴ Roe presented the sultan's condition as a separate request in his letter to the king but was more honest with the Council, admitting that he had agreed to the condition to ensure action on the piracy issue.⁵ This was a bold step because the English did not usually make

1. The Emir of Sidon, the Lebanese leader, Emir Fakr al-din II Manoğlu was a regular rebel against Ottoman control. He was involved in the Celali rebellion of 1607 and allied with Spain and Malta against the Porte, thus making the Porte vulnerable on its southern maritime flank. For Roe's view, see Negs. pp. 18-20 Relations from Constantinople, 9/19 Feb. 1621/2.

2. Negs. pp. 21-22 Roe to Calvert, 8/18 Mar. 1621/2; 22-3 Roe to James, 9/19 Mar. 1621/2

3. SP97/8 f. 133 Roe to Lords of Council, 21 Mar. 1622

4. Negs. pp. 34-5 Roe to Council, 29 Apr. 1622. For the continuing difficulties of English merchants in Algiers, see Wood pp. 61-4.

5 Negs. pp. 30-32 Roe to James I, 28 Apr. 1622; 34-5 Roe to Council, 29 Apr. 1622

agreements with the Porte that bound them to long-term conditions.¹ Roe was taking the risk that the authorities in England would recognise his diplomatic experience and be prepared to agree to any diplomatic resolution of such an acute problem.

The Algiers Negotiations

Roe had a period of grace in which to work at achieving a concrete demonstration of the Porte's commitment because of the patchy communications which operated between England and the Porte. In August 1622, he complained that the Privy Council was still writing as if nothing had been achieved, whereas in fact,

'I had long before performed what was now required of mee and have sent to these lordshipps, by the Company, coppies of all the commands and letters procured in this court, which were dispeeded in May last by an express servant of the Grand Signior, accompanied with and Englishman [George Vernon] in a gally of the Port, so effectuall and full that if they prevayle not, I have yet declared, that ther is no remedye to bee expected hence.'²

Roe added that he had complained again to the new Paşa, who was departing for Tunis, and sent him copies of the commands and letters, to reinforce the English position.

The letters obtained from the sultan were only the first stage in a complex set of negotiations. The proceedings are outlined in translations of the letters from the Porte to England and to the Barbary States contained in the Company Court Book of Roe's residence.³

In May 1622, Osman had sent an envoy, accompanied by an English delegation, to Algiers. The letters he carried were probably Imperial commands of the same kind as William Harborne (1583-88) and Thomas Glover (1606-12) had obtained, instructing the Barbary States to desist from piracy. Such commands usually proved ineffective but on this occasion, in keeping with the growing resistance to Ottoman authority in Algiers, they sparked off resentment. When the Porte

1 For a comparison between this point of Roe's strategy and English negotiations with Salée in the 1630s, see below p. 202 ff.

2 Negs. pp. 75-6 Roe to Calvert, 24 Aug. 1622

3. PRO SP105/102 ff. 82a-94

reinforced these first orders with another set, a deputation from Algiers arrived at the Porte to make counter demands against the English.¹

This delegation arrived at the end of March 1623, and constituted the arrival of a negotiating team directed to gain redress of complaints against the English. Their complaints centred mainly around the behaviour of the former English consul, the capture of Barbary ships and attacks on Algiers by English ships.²

Roe denied these claims, suggesting that the naval activity referred to was that of English renegades and not a state-sponsored programme. He emphasized that any such activities would have been punished in England if the authorities had been aware of them and reiterated the Barbary offences 'which you can neither deny nor defend'.³

The Porte recognised that this stand-off by both sides complicated the dispute and made a straightforward resolution virtually impossible. The result, as presented by the Porte, was that the sultan issued an imperial command (*hatt-i hümayun*) stating 'what is done is done' and gave a decree to the effect that

'there be no more remembrance of the enmity past. But that between you and the English nation, peace and friendship may bee renewed and established, conformable to the antient league and amitty continued to this day betweene our Emperour and his Majestie of England.'⁴

The letters from the Porte stated that Algiers agreed to the order on certain conditions. This promoted the Porte as the fount of authority and justice, maintaining the capitulations between England and Turkey and successfully dictating policy to its vassals and complied with the

1 Negs. pp. 117-9 Roe to Lords of King's Council, 25 Jan. 1622/3. Roe was also unhappy about the Porte's second set of orders, having discovered and removed a hidden clause that no ship registered as English could fight with Barbary ships or carry enemies' goods.

2 For Roe's summary and justification, see Negs. pp. 139-41 Roe to Lords of King's Council, 4 Apr. 1623

3. PRO SP105/102 ff. 82a-85a Translation of Kapudan Paşa's letter to James I, 15 Mar. 1622/3

4 Ibid

Ottoman model of unilateral diplomacy.

Despite the deceptively arrogant style, full scale negotiation took place to establish a separate set of capitulations, applying to relations between England and Algiers. Once this test set of capitulations was drafted, it was broadened to include Tunis. A translation of the agreement was described as capitulations in the Company Court Book and was written in the usual form of capitulations between the Porte and England. It included a summary of English relations with the Porte, James I's complaints on the piracy issue and the proceedings leading up to the actual capitulations, which were listed.

The actual terms further suggest that the final agreement was a set of capitulations because they were unreservedly favourable to the English. In return for the re-establishment of English trade with the Barbary States, the Algerians agreed to safeguard the English community in Algiers and allow them free conduct on land and sea as long as they flew the English flag. In addition, a reciprocal release of English galley slaves and Algerian slaves in English captivity was formally established.

The shuttle diplomacy organised by the *Kapudan Paşa*, Halil Paşa, to extend the agreement to Tunis and enforce it in Algiers indicates that the agreement made was not merely a treaty between the Barbary States and England at the Porte but a separate set of capitulations, negotiated through the Porte, on the model of those with the Porte, to deal specifically with relations between England and the Porte's vassal state.

Roe was clearly a moving force behind this agreement and boasted as much himself, suggesting to Calvert between the initial overtures to the Barbary States and the full negotiations that 'I presumed to take that way, and so procured strong commands for our quiett trade and passage in the sea, as they were subjects and wee friends to this Port.'¹

Roe's methods and motives can be gleaned from his various correspondences. The clear

1. *Negs.* pp. 112-14 Roe to Calvert, 14/24 Dec. 1622

departure from Roe's remit to deal with the piracy issue was his agreement to resume trade with the Barbary States. Such a major step could not have been taken without the agreement of at least the English merchant community in Constantinople. The Company had already been willing to send the former ambassador Thomas Glover to negotiate on their behalf, but Roe persuaded them that using the Porte as mediator would be cheaper and achieve a broader agreement.¹ The inclusion of George Vernon, a Company man, to act as witness and representative in the first deputation from the Porte to Algiers, suggests that the Company was well aware of its interests in the case.²

Moreover, the plan avoided the necessity of investing in another fleet for the Mediterranean. In May 1622, when Roe's first ambitious plan had been presented to the Company in England, they had supported a treaty to free the English captives but had been unwilling to finance another fleet. They claimed that the decay of trade in the area had made it impossible to fund another contribution for the suppression of the pirates.

Once the final capitulations were drawn up, Roe also referred to the terms of the agreement which 'will settle both a trade in those parts convenient for the merchants and peace in the seas.'³ Roe had clearly secured the approval of the Company for his action but still had to convince the Crown of its efficacy.

Roe had already defended his reasons for pursuing this particular course, stating:

'I have taken the articles and commands here, assisted with letters from the Viziers...to procure a peace by the authority of this court and to settle our consuls, merchants and trade there which is more honourable for his majesty and lesse charge to the merchants then any treaty of knaves and robbers.'⁴

1. SP105/102 f. 53a *Company Court* at Constantinople, 8 Apr. 1622

2. Vernon was sent back to Algiers to ratify the capitulations, see SP105/102 f. 94a *Company Court* at Constantinople, 9 Apr. 1623.

3. *Negs.* pp. 139-41 Roe to King's Council, 4 Apr. 1623

4. SP97/8 f. 151 Roe to Calvert 28 Apr. 1622

Roe realised that nothing long-term could be achieved by payment and promises without written confirmation. The capitulations accommodated small breaches and had a formal mechanism for complaint through the English ambassador at the Porte. In Roe's opinion they were the only fora for peace with the Barbary States.

Roe also had no desire to involve England in direct negotiations with pirates as he considered this a sullied form of diplomacy. The Porte could achieve tangible results by enforcing the agreement as a capitulatory grant.¹ Roe emphasised this aspect, noting:

'I hope you will finde that I have made no condition dishonourable to his Majestie, nor really anything newe, butt with reference of our part, to the ancient capitulations; nor that I have treated anything with them as a free people, but with the commissioners of this state, appointed by the Grand Signior.'²

By remoulding the capitulations to accommodate the Barbary States, Roe maintained England's diplomatic credibility and achieved a solution which had some chance of lasting.

Roe's policy contrasted with that of the Dutch, who negotiated their own agreement with the Barbary States. They dealt directly with them, sending a deputation with promises to make joint raids against the Spanish coasts.³ The Dutch had nothing to lose from joining forces against Spain. Roe realised that James, with his policy of Anglo-Hispanic entente would not find this an acceptable practice.

The exceptional terms which Roe won from the Porte had much to do with the situation of English foreign policy and the domestic situation in the Ottoman Empire. Roe realised that local rebellion and the lack of full naval control in the Mediterranean placed constraints on the Porte. Having also disabused himself of the feasibility of an English naval campaign, he used the restricted position of the Porte to further his aims in diplomacy.

Roe's main weapon was the threat of joint Anglo-Hispanic action against the Barbary

1. SP97/8 f. 158a Roe to Archbishop Abbot, 29 Apr. 1622

2. *Negs.* pp. 139-41 Roe to Council, 4 Apr. 1623

3. *Negs.* pp. 120-122 Roe to Calvert, 25 Jan. 1622

States. As Roe explained in his report to the King's Council of January 1623, the Porte was 'not desirous to enforce his Majestie's fleets to enjoyne with Spayne, nor to see them in those seas.'¹ Roe boosted the threat posed by the English fleet by warning that he would recommend an active naval policy if the Porte did not support the English against Barbary piracy. Roe also warned that if the piracy issue was not resolved, James I would withdraw the English community from the Ottoman Empire. This was a real threat given James I's distaste for Anglo-Ottoman relations.²

The Porte was sufficiently worried about being involved in a Mediterranean conflict to take Roe's threats seriously. The Ottomans needed to retain their fleet close to home to repel the Cossack raiders. They also wanted to maintain trade links with England to generate funds to supply troops. The revolt of Abaza Paşa in eastern Anatolia prevented them from executing a westward military policy. They could not risk losing the English trade, or being diverted against a joint fleet of Spanish and English ships.

The establishment of a capitulatory agreement represented a radical change in English policy towards the Barbary States. Previously, they had used economic embargoes, ad hoc donatives to release captives and in extreme instances, naval campaigns. All of these had proved ineffective and expensive. Roe's policy, if enforced, held the advantage of being self-supporting in that it generated trade, and protected English shipping in the region.

The agreement had the weight of the sultan's authority behind it to commend it to the Barbary States, although Roe was aware that it would take considerable efforts by successive English ambassadors at the Porte to ensure that the Porte maintained its protection of the privileges encompassed by the capitulations. Even this agreement had to have the force of annual donatives to the Algerian authorities behind it to ensure its survival.

Repercussions of the Algiers Negotiations

1. Negs. pp. 117-19 Roe to Council, 25 Jan. 1623

2. SP97/8 f. 176 Council to Roe, 6 Jun. 1622

In the early stages of Roe's negotiations, the English authorities had supported Roe wholeheartedly. Calvert had confirmed that Roe's policy had been accepted, declaring that he was sure Roe had settled the Barbary piracy problem because there had been no complaints recently from the Admiralty Board concerning such incidents.¹ However, the new capitulations proved a controversial topic at the English court, because there was still a fear that Roe had made a treaty with the pirates. Opposition to Roe's policy in England was sufficient to persuade John Chamberlain that Roe was about to be 'disavowed' and to lose the 'treaty' he had secured.² Chamberlain's concern over the concept of a 'treaty' suggests that Roe was right to emphasise that he had not dealt with the Barbary States directly.

Opposition also arose over who was responsible for paying for the negotiations. As late as January 1623, Roe had complained to Calvert that he was paying for them himself. Such protracted negotiations needed more generous bribes than usual and, as always, the ambassador's strict allowance was limited. The Company believed that since it was not the only trading company to benefit from the agreement it should not be the sole contributor to the cost. It maintained that, as in the case of supplying Mediterranean fleets, the merchants of the Spanish Company and the fishing communities of the Western ports who had suffered pirate raids, should also contribute.³

Roe knew that whatever arrangements were made, funds would be required to free the English captives held in Algiers. He had already suggested that such funds should come from the churches of London and Middlesex.⁴ Unfortunately, as George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury pointed out, there was very little chance of implementing such a programme.

'There wanteth some body to sollicite it. And true it is, that the whole kingdome

1. Negs. pp. 104-7 Calvert to Roe, 29 Nov. 1622

2. Chamberlain, II no. 434 to Dudley Carleton, 12 Jul. 1623

3. Negs. pp. 117-19 Roe to Council, 25 Jan. 1623

4. Negs. pp. 30-2 Roe to James I, 28 Apr. 1622; pp. 35-6 Roe to Lord Keeper, 28 Apr. 1622

is much exhausted by the affaires which cause alone, for some yeares that are past, hath drawne from mee out of my meanes, which are not greate above 1000L. a yeere in mony; and when wee shall have an end, onely God doth know...'¹

Another plan for a levy of one percent on merchant communities with interests in the Levant and Indian Ocean was also unpopular.² There were so many complaints from merchants about payment that Calvert imposed a decision on them to sort out some method of payment to Roe.³

The Companies who traded in the Mediterranean were still paying off their debts from the Mansell campaign and Roe resigned himself to suffering personal financial loss over the issue. This lack of cooperation over funding initiatives in the Mediterranean continued throughout Charles I's reign and goes some way to explaining the later failure of the ship-money tax.

Accusations were also made that Roe's agreement with the Porte in some way pledged the English to aid the Porte against Spain, thus endangering the cordiality which had developed in Anglo-Spanish relations. Roe insisted that Spain was not even mentioned in the text of the agreement. He explained that the only reference to the enemies of the Porte was a warning to English ships that they helped enemy ships at their own peril. Roe argued that he had managed to have a clause inserted to the effect that such actions by individuals did not constitute a breach of the agreement.⁴ This aspect of the hostility was possibly manufactured by the pro-Spanish faction of the Court in an attempt to limit Roe's activity but it also reflects English concern over Roe's dealings with the Porte, in the light of the Dutch agreement with the Barbary States.

Roe's policy was generally successful in its implementation. The captives were freed when negotiations were complete and the costs absorbed by the Company so that immediate hostility to the policy was rapidly overtaken by praise. The Crown commended it and it was cited by the

1. Negs. pp. 102-4 Archbishop of Canterbury to Roe, 22 Nov. 1622

2. Negs. pp. 133-5 Roe to Archbishop of Canterbury, 8/18 Mar 1622

3. Negs. pp. 160-61 Calvert to Roe, 6 Jun. 1623

4. Negs. p. 177 Roe to Grandison, 20/30 Sept. 1623

Levant merchants as a reason for maintaining Roe at the Porte for a second term.¹ The Company had most to lose from the piracy in the Mediterranean and the most to pay in maintaining the agreement. Their approbation justified Roe's boast that this agreement was one of the successes of his residence.

Implementation of the Agreement

Once Roe had completed the initial agreement, he had to ensure its successful operation. In the spring of 1624, he was concerned by the presence of Barbary pirates in the Aegean, although he admitted that the agreement seemed to be lasting since no complaints about attacks on English shipping had reached him. He had decided to work for a reinforcement of the agreement on the accession of Murad IV.² This was secured in mid-1624, when Roe sent letters to the King from Murad and the Grand Vizier, outlining the piracy agreement.³

Roe's attempts at renewing the treaty were jeopardised by a major attack by the Algiers fleet on all shipping at Iskenderun, which he reported on 4/14 September 1624. This was a setback but Roe worked with the Vizier to repair the situation. He engineered the sending of a new Paşa to Algiers, with strict instructions to maintain the agreement with the English. Roe was not optimistic about the establishment of a long-term peace but hoped for a temporary implementation while he sought for a means to secure the agreement. Once again, the cost of the negotiations was high and Roe requested an allowance of 1000 dollars to use as a gift to maintain the goodwill of the new Paşa whom the Porte was sending to Algiers.⁴ At this point, Roe's 'oeuvre de chef', as Chamberlain had called the negotiations, looked close to breaking point.

Despite these set-backs, the Algiers agreement held. By September 1624, Roe was satisfied

1. SP97/11 f. 3 Roe to Buckingham, citing Levant Company petition, 11/21 Jun. 1625

2. Negs. pp. 223-5 Roe to Calvert, 6 Mar. 1623/4

3. Negs. pp. 261-4 Letters from Sultan and Grand Vizier, 24 Jul. 1624

4. Negs. pp. 279-80 Roe to Council, 4/14 Sept. 1624

that he had achieved a resolution of the piracy issue.¹ In December 1624, when Roe was beginning to petition the authorities in England for his revocation, he cited the piracy negotiations as one of the achievements of his residence.² In February 1625, he informed Prince Charles of the continued success of the agreement, although he had to request remuneration for the annual 'gift' to the Paşa of Algiers.³

Roe needed bribes to counteract the activities of the Dutch and French in Algiers. They also had trade interests there and were trying to drive the English from that port.⁴ Roe also used Dudley Carleton, the English ambassador at the Hague, to remove the troublesome Dutch consul at Algiers.⁵

There is no clear indication of when these 'teething troubles' ceased. Certainly, Roe mentioned the piracy issue less in his correspondence after April 1625 and in the same month, a messenger from the authorities in Algiers attended the English court. The exotic gifts which he brought suggest that his purpose was to seal the agreement made at the Porte.⁶ The real indication that the agreement was working is to be found in Conway's instructions to Roe on his re-establishment as ambassador on Phillips' death in 1626.⁷ He instructed Roe that he was to renew the agreement with the Barbary States 'to the greatest observance possible' and was to attempt to extend the agreement to include a security arrangement whereby the English fleet could use

1. SP97/10 f. 117 Roe to Conway, 4 Sept. 1624

2. Negs. pp. 320-21 Roe to Grandison, 9/19 Dec. 1624

3. SP97/10 f. 191 Roe to Prince Charles, 5/15 Feb. 1624/5

4. Negs. pp. 376-77 Roe to Council, 15/25 Apr. 1625

5. Negs. pp. 229 Roe to Carleton, 3 Apr. 1624

6. Chamberlain II, nos. 471, 472

7 Roe made several requests to be relieved of his commission. Wranglings over a suitable successor delayed his return and the final compromise choice of Sir Thomas Phillips failed with the latter's sudden death before he set out for the Porte. See Negs. pp. 501-5 Conway to Roe, 20 Apr. 1626.

Barbary Ports as a refuge.¹ Only if the English authorities were confident of the existing arrangement would they suggest such a radical addition.

Roe successfully engineered this further renewal of the treaty and the mechanism for complaint in the new capitulations was used in the correspondence of its renewal. A formal complaint from Charles I cited the case of Richard Chambers and the 'Bee', taken by pirates from Tunis, and this was taken up by the Porte as a breach of the capitulations.² The agreement which Roe had laboured so hard over was finally beginning to operate efficiently and successfully.

There was one final hitch to the agreement with a coup in Algiers of September 1626.³ The uncertainty as to whether the new authorities would accept vassal status to the Porte jeopardised the agreement which had been formed under the aegis of the Porte's authority over the Barbary States.⁴ Nevertheless, Roe was able to treat with the *Kapudan Paşa* for the admittance of the English fleet to Ottoman ports. He also secured an interview with the new Paşa of Tunis who would deal with Algerian affairs until the problem was resolved.

Roe was satisfied with the outcome of these negotiations. His report to the Council of 20/30 November 1626 summarised the successful development of his policy concerning the pirate states. He countered the criticism of those who 'neglect the peace and disvallow whatsoever hath beene done', arguing that within the terms of trade with the Ottoman Empire, where merchants always expected some degree of trouble, small breaches in the peace could be expected. The success of this agreement lay in the formal mechanisms of complaint and these, in general, had been observed.⁵

1. *Negs.* pp. 517-19 Conway to Roe, 29 May 1626

2. SP104/167 f. 123-5 Charles I to Dey of Tunis, 4 Sept. 1626

3 *Negs.* pp. 547-51 Roe to Conway, 6/16 Sept. 1626

4. *Negs.* pp. 558-62 Roe to Conway, 22 Sept. 1626

5. *Negs.* pp. 572-4 Roe to Council, 20/30 Nov. 1626

The formal declaration of its renewal by Murad IV to Charles I in January 1627 reflected the long-term success of his efforts.

The ebb and flow of the agreement reflected the wider changes in the Mediterranean situation and in the direction of English foreign policy in general. At the time of the Spanish entente, Roe had difficulty maintaining the agreement. This was partly because the Barbary States were suspicious of English motives for seeking peace but also because the naval activity of the Spanish in the Mediterranean forced the Barbary pirates further East and into conflict with English ships trading with other Ottoman ports.

The failure of the Spanish match and the increasingly anti-Habsburg stance of English foreign policy encouraged the Barbary States to seal a beneficial trade arrangement, allowing the English to trade in their ports. With the Western nations divided against themselves and increased anti-Spanish naval activity on the part of English ships the Barbary states found the Western Mediterranean re-opened to them again, reducing their dependence on merchant prizes in the east Mediterranean.

Roe's Algiers agreement survived, with a few notable breaches and several renewals, throughout the seventeenth century. It had an advantage over the direct bilateral treaties agreed by the French and Dutch because it gave the English access to the Porte in cases of Barbary piracy. Although the Porte was not always capable of resolving such cases, it attempted to compensate the English with promises of enforcement and, more importantly, with the release of captives or ships held at the Porte, to create the illusion that it controlled its subject states more fully than it actually did. The agreement also prevented some Barbary attacks on English shipping.

The Saltee Rovers - Intervention by the English Crown

One force left unchecked by the terms of the Algiers agreement was the so-called Saltee Rovers. These were a rather amorphous group of pirates, including several English renegades and

pirates among their number, which operated out of the Moroccan port of Sallee (Sala, Salé) on the Atlantic coast. They terrorised ships in the Mediterranean and made raids on the English coast throughout the 1620s and increasingly in the 1630s.

The success of Roe's agreement in the 1620s and 1630s reduced the threat of piracy in the Eastern Mediterranean and made it easier for the English authorities to distinguish the Sallee Rovers as a separate group. Since the Kingdom of Morocco was independent of Ottoman control, and the port of Sallee had become semi-autonomous by the 1620s, the task of dealing with the Rovers was to prove more difficult than the Algiers negotiations as there was no third party through which to negotiate a settlement.

Indeed, a comparison of how the English authorities handled the problem of Sallee with the way in which Roe dealt with Algiers and Tunis, shows how important an asset the English ambassador to the Porte was to English security policy in the region. It also illustrates that the Crown had to achieve Atlantic security before it could concern itself again with the Mediterranean. The survival, at least to a workable degree, of Roe's agreement with the Barbary States gave the English authorities the breathing space they needed to deal with the Atlantic.

Throughout the late 1620s after the disastrous naval campaigns of Cadiz and La Rochelle, when England was fighting both Spain and France, the English Crown attempted to pacify the Sallee pirates, as it could ill afford any more disturbance to its shipping. The royal agent, John Harrison made repeated trips to Sallee, offering concessions and seeking alliances. His main aim was to secure the release of English prisoners but he offered munitions as well as the usual ransom or exchange of prisoners.¹

In 1626, Harrison extended his offer to include trade in return for a halt in raids. This was a similar proposal to that at the core of Roe's agreement and also resulted in the drawing up of a draft agreement. The Admiralty Board Judge, Sir Henry Marten, refused to allow the proposal on two counts which Roe himself had been concerned about. His first anxiety was that an

¹ See B.L. Add. MSS 21,993 f. 284 Endorsement of Charles' Commission to Harrison, 5 Nov 1626.

agreement to trade was a long term commitment, which could not be guaranteed. Any agreement conditional upon successful trade had the potential for compromising the Crown in the future.

Marten's second argument was that the Salleemen were both pirates and rebels against the Moroccan King, making any alliance with them dishonourable. Without the veneer of respectability which the Porte's involvement lent to Roe's agreement with the Barbary States, a direct agreement with a pirate state seemed impossible.

Even without the ratification of the Harrison treaty, the English government continued to appease the Salleemen while England remained at war in Europe. Their policy displayed a sense of urgency generally lacking in Mediterranean matters. While Roe had struggled to obtain repayment for his expenditure to free slaves, the English authorities were prepared to offer concessions when the same activity occurred closer to home.

They went even further than Roe had been prepared to go, declaring in a proclamation of 1628 that any Englishman committing violence against vessels in the Barbary ports, including those of Sallee, would be punished. The proclamation could not be enforced and this failure antagonised the Salleemen who demanded restitution and returned to raiding Atlantic waters.

By 1630, when England made peace with her European enemies, the policy of pacification seemed futile but it faltered along until 1636, when internal turmoil in Sallee offered the English an opportunity for military intervention. The resulting expedition, while it did not involve the Ottoman Empire or its vassals, marked an important turning point in English policy towards the Mediterranean. The English fleet destroyed a proportion of the Sallee fleet and did severe damage to its harbour, putting the Sallee pirates temporarily out of action. Its success was rapidly overshadowed in England by growing resistance to the ship money levy which had funded it and it was not followed through by the annual expeditions required to suppress piracy in the long-term.¹ Nevertheless, it was the first royal campaign in the region which was well planned,

¹ Kenneth R. Andrews: *Ships, Money and Politics* (Cambridge, 1991) Chap. 7: 'William Rainborowe and the Sallee Rovers'

competently led and adequately supplied. Its success owed a great deal to the civil strife in Salée but the confidence of the mission was a result of the sufficiency of its resources, supplied through the ship money levy.¹

The levy went some way to answering the Company's complaints that it had to provide ships and funding for any expedition in the region. The Crown was beginning to accept some responsibility for naval security, even though its priority was the stability of Atlantic waters.

The campaign against the Salée Rovers was designed to extend the security of English shipping to areas beyond those covered by the Algiers agreement. As Salée was beyond the control of the Ottoman Empire, there was no reaction to the expedition at the Porte. Nevertheless, the Salée campaign did have long-term consequences for the Ottoman Empire, as it proved that an efficient navy could make a successful strike at piracy in its home base.

The English Civil War Period

In the 1640s, there was no royal naval involvement in the Mediterranean as the navy was preoccupied with the English Civil War. The English ambassador at the Porte, Sackville Crow (1639-47), was also embroiled in dispute with the merchant community and so failed to campaign for a more active maintenance of the Algiers agreement. As the Barbary States paid less attention to the Porte's commands, knowing that the Porte was too preoccupied with domestic instability during the reign of '*deli*' (mad) Ibrahim (1640-48) to react, so the effectiveness of the Algiers agreement diminished. Even had Crow pressed the cases of piracy, it is doubtful that the Porte could have acted to secure the agreement, which reached a crisis in the late 1640s. With the end of the Civil War and the beginning of Bendish's residence (1647-60), merchants again demanded action from the English authorities to deal with the piracy issue. Both Crow and Bendish were mainly concerned with complaints concerning English involvement in the Venetian war, which

¹ On the domestic wranglings over this tax, see above, p. 25.

were not covered by Roe's umbrella agreement but Bendish also had to deal with the effects on the Porte of a more aggressive English naval policy in the Mediterranean.¹

Mediterranean Policy During the Protectorate

The offensive naval policy exhibited in the Salée Campaign developed under the Protectorate. The revitalised English navy asserted control over the shipping lanes of the Mediterranean. Cromwell was determined to safeguard English trade interests, including those which lay on the route to English expansion to the East. His policy reflected the sentiment of 'national glory' apparent in the Elizabethan era, but had the added advantage of an efficient and well organised state navy to execute it.

The extension of Cromwell's policy to the Mediterranean was shortlived, as it had been under Charles I, as the priority remained the Atlantic and competition from France and the Dutch, preventing any continuous campaign in the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, Admiral Blake's campaign in the Mediterranean in 1655 went some way to addressing the piracy problem.² It gave merchants time to reorganise themselves after the internal conflict of the English community in the 1640s. The Blake Campaign also had an impact on the strength of the Ottoman Empire in its Venetian war.

The Blake Campaign

The main success of the campaign was Blake's destruction of the Tunis fleet between April and May 1655.³ The new model navy imitated the Caroline example of wiping out piracy at source. Blake's action was a response to merchants' growing demands for a strategic presence in

1 On Bendish's policy concerning the Ottoman-Venetian war, see below p. 229 ff.

2 On the broader context of Blake's expedition, see W.B. Cogar: 'The Politics of Naval Administration' Oxford D.Phil thesis 1961 pp. 176-89.

3 For the detail of Blake's campaign see Corbett, England in the Mediterranean I Chap. 17 pp. 294-317 and Bernard Capp, Cromwell's Navy (Clarendon, Oxford, 1989) pp. 94-95.

the Mediterranean and was successful in temporarily stopping one source of pirate activity in the region.

The merchants, while pleased with the result, had not expected action on such a scale or so rapidly, and were concerned about the implications for English relations with the Porte. The news of Blake's victory spread through the Mediterranean consulates, accompanied by foreboding as to what Mehmed IV's reaction would be. The general consensus was that Blake had chosen a dangerous time although this was tempered by appreciation of the action.

Blake had struck when the Ottomans were most dependent on North African naval support in their war against the Venetians and most likely to act upon complaints from Tunis. His attack prevented the Barbary fleet from participating in the annual battle over the Dardanelles. The resulting reduction in Ottoman naval forces gave the Venetians an important victory on 21 June.¹

With this Venetian success, it seemed at first that the worst fears of the English community were to be realised. Blake himself was worried about the consequences of his action.²

John Aldworth, consul at Marseilles, reported to Secretary Thurloe:

‘from Smyrna I have advice againe that the nation are in greate feare of being trobled by the grand seigneur by reason of General Blake's proceedings at Tunis.’³

An intelligence report of July of the same year, although later contradicted, gave a more substantial reason for their fear, suggesting that orders had been given to seize all English merchant ships.⁴

In fact, Blake's action could not have come at a more opportune moment for the English.

1 For details of this battle, see R.C. Anderson: Naval Wars in the Levant 1559-1853 (Liverpool, 1952) pp. 153-55

2 See Capp: Navy p. 94-95.

3. Thurloe, III p. 560 Aldworth to Thurloe, 29 Jun. 1655

4 Thurloe, III pp. 579-80 3 July, 1655.

As Lawrence reported on 20 August, there was a flux of viziers at the Porte and this confused situation delayed the presentation of a petition against the English by a delegation from Tunis. Although the Ottomans eventually gave the delegation some artillery to pacify them, they were not prepared to clamp down completely on the English.¹

The leisurely pace of the Ottomans was encouraged at least in part by Bendish's manoeuvres behind the scenes. Charles Longland, agent at Leghorn, reported to Thurloe that Bendish had visited and pacified the Turks over the Tunis business.² Bendish acted to take precautions against reprisals immediately on hearing the news of Blake's victory and this confirms the rapidity of the English communication system within the Mediterranean region, as the news passed through the consular system as well as directly via Blake himself.³

The extent of Bendish's successful defence of the English action to the Porte is indicated by the Porte's acceptance of the new English consul to Tunis, Thomas Champion, soon after.⁴ Allegations were later made that Bendish had to agree to provide ships for the Ottoman navy in return for Ottoman leniency.⁵ The Venetians already suspected that Bendish was doing deals with the Porte, to gain favourable terms in return for English ships.⁶ However, given the merchants' continued support for him and his own vehemence on the subject, he was either conducting such negotiations with extreme discretion or was a convenient scape-goat for Venetian anxieties about

1 Thurloe, III p. 726 Lawrence to Cromwell, 20 Aug. 1655

2 Thurloe, III pp. 662-3, Longland to Thurloe, 30 Jul. 1655: Lawrence confirmed this visit, see Ibid, IV pp. 138-40 Lawrence to Protector, 1 Nov. 1655.

3 Corbett: England in the Mediterranean, I p. 310 for suggestion that Blake personally dispatched warning to Bendish after battle.

4 Thurloe, V p. 725-26 Bendish to Thurloe, 23 Dec. 1656

5 See below p. 232 ff.

6 CSPV 1647-52 p. 84 no. 227 Giovanni Soranzo, Bailo to Doge and Senate, 20 Jan. 1648/9; p. 96 no. 261 Ibid to Ibid, 25 Apr. 1649; p. 98 no. 268 Giulio Alberto, Venetian Secretary at Constantinople to Doge and Senate, 5 May 1649; p. 106 no. 295 Niccolo Sagredo, Venetian Ambassador in Germany [passing on intelligence from Constantinople] to Doge and Senate, 21 Jun. 1649

the number of English ships independently serving the Porte.

The letters Bendish urged Cromwell to write to prevent reprisals in the future did not suggest any mention of favours to the Ottomans but rather an assertion of English ability to match reprisals with like action. Bendish was certain that the English position at the Porte was inherently secure and able to withstand the Porte's response to Cromwell's vigorous naval policy.

Although accurate in his assessment of the English position, Bendish was over-optimistic about the extent to which Cromwell intended to police the Mediterranean. Blake's campaign marked the final action of the state navy in the Mediterranean in this period. The English authorities continued to display an ambivalence about the Mediterranean which reflected the way they felt towards the Ottoman Empire itself. They recognised that the region was vital to English commercial interests, and even political stability in Europe, but were not yet able to take full responsibility for maintaining their security interests there. The pull of the Atlantic still remained stronger than that of the Mediterranean.

Despite the problems involved in managing naval security policy in the Mediterranean, successive ambassadors continued to use their relationship with the Porte to secure a workable diplomatic agreement on piracy. One of Winchilsea's first actions when he arrived as ambassador to the Porte in 1661 was to negotiate a renewal of the agreement with Algiers, which had survived since Roe first established it in the 1620s, despite a reduction in its effectiveness in the 1640s. Winchilsea made formal complaints about the reception he had received in Algiers to the Porte at his audience with the Porte. The English could still hope for more success in dealing with the control of piracy through the Porte, rather than directly with the Barbary States.¹

The umbrella of security which Roe established against the pirate raids of the Barbary States could not hope to remove the threat of piracy completely. The growth of pirate attacks was an unfortunate corollary of the rising prosperity of English merchants in the region. Other nations

¹ Rycaut p. 6

too, were involved in the lucrative business of seizing ships, goods and men. Nevertheless, while breaches in the Algiers agreement occurred, the agreement continued to have positive results, which can clearly be seen in the resolution of individual cases.¹ It offered some cover and a formal mechanism of redress of grievance which made it both desirable and pragmatic, and safeguarded the security of English interests in the Mediterranean more effectively and continuously than any naval action had done.

¹ These are discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VIII. DEALING WITH INDIVIDUAL CASES OF IMPRISONMENT AND PIRACY AT THE PORTE

Beyond establishing umbrella agreements on the conduct of shipping in the Mediterranean, ambassadors were concerned with individual acts of piracy. They had to defend Englishmen and goods taken by pirates, and play down the role of English pirates in the region. Successive ambassadors' attempts to protect English victims and perpetrators provide good information on how the capitulations and petitioning system worked for resident ambassadors at the Porte.

The sultan was the formal channel of complaint in cases of Barbary piracy. His response to offences depended on the extent of his control over the Barbary states at the time and whether he was relying on the naval assistance of the Barbary fleet. From the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Paşas appointed by the sultan to administrate in the Barbary States found their power undermined by janissary forces sent to support them.¹ The situation reached a climax in the 1630s and 1640s when the Barbary States acted almost autonomously but the Porte still attempted to maintain the illusion of full sovereignty over the region.

English ambassadors realised that they could not always expect the Porte to resolve cases of Barbary piracy successfully. As Peter Wych (1628-39) commented in 1631:

'there is no complaininge of these disturbances heere for yt cannot be redressed from this Porte. For those people will obeye but what seemeth beste and well unto them.'²

Nevertheless, an examination of several cases which English ambassadors brought before the Porte indicates that they were treated fairly when they presented clear-cut cases of piracy. The Ottoman authorities responded to English complaints in order to demonstrate that they had not lost control of their maritime vassel states.

The Porte continued to depend on the Barbary fleet, especially during its war with the

1 For the internal situation in the Barbary States, see Andrew Hess: The Forgotten Frontier (Chicago, 1978) pp. 158-70.

2 PRO SP97/15 f. 102 Wych to Secretary of State, Earl of Dorchester, 12 Jun. 1631

Venetians (1645–69), which made it more difficult to obtain compensation for victims of Barbary piracy. Thomas Bendish (1647–60) realised that the Porte was restricted in its actions by its reliance on the Barbary fleet:

‘it must needs prove at this tyme very difficult to winne the vizier to grant anything which may prove distastefull to their friends at Tunis and Algire, on whom the Empire at present chiefly relyes for their ayde and assistance with shipping in their warre with the Venetians.’¹

Despite these concerns, even in such exceptionally difficult circumstances, ambassadors continued to approach cases through the formal *arz* (petition) mechanism and achieved some successes in doing so.

Administrative Procedure

Ambassadors opened such negotiations with a general petition reproaching the sultan for the extent of piracy in his territorial waters, formally making it a contravention of the capitulations. Once general complaints had been voiced, ambassadors presented specific cases to the Porte. In cases concerning the capture of ships they argued that piracy was damaging the successful trade between England and Turkey. Petitions for the release of sailors sold into slavery were made on humanitarian grounds.

In all cases, ambassadors used a two-tier approach, first making a personal appeal and then reinforcing it with official letters from the Crown. Broaching the subject directly engaged Ottoman interest in a case, while letters from the English authorities registered it officially and ensured that attention was continuously focused on the matter.

Ambassadors had to agitate further at regular intervals, citing the acceptance of the documents for due procedure by a particular vizier as their authority for doing so. When there was a rapid flux of viziers, most notably in the early 1650s before the first of the Köprülü Viziers came to power and brought more stability to public affairs, this was particularly important. The

¹ PRO SP/97/17 f. 23 Bendish to Council of State, 13 Dec. 1649

whole process was a question of wearing down the Ottoman authorities through a series of well established diplomatic channels.

One case which demonstrates this diplomatic process well was the case of the ship 'George' in the 1650s.¹ This was a merchant ship which was captured by the Barbary fleet in the Mediterranean and placed in service for the Turks against the Venetians. It was seized and fired at Rhodes and suffered damage estimated at 50,000 lion dollars.

In a preliminary to the presentation of this case to the Porte, Bendish, as ambassador, had endorsed a petition to Cromwell from the ship's commander William White, asking Cromwell to seek reparation for the damage done from the Porte. This ensured that the ambassador had the maximum chance of following the case through at the Porte. In due course Cromwell made the required official response.²

There was a delay in proceedings because the letters were included in Lawrence's official letters accrediting him as an agent which Bendish prevented from being submitted.³ When the Commonwealth authorities gave up their attempt to remove Bendish, he was instructed to renew the petition, using the original letter which Lawrence had carried.⁴ He gained an audience with the Grand Vizier and the letter was received by the Ottoman chancery. A further delay occurred because of Ramazan (the Muslim month of fasting) when the Vizier did not hold audiences but both Bendish and Lawrence were hopeful of a successful outcome to the matter.⁵

Unfortunately, domestic Ottoman events saw the fall of the Grand Vizier and the case was delayed again. Bendish followed up the issue as soon as a new vizier, Mehmed Köprülü was

1 This was evidently not the more famous 'George', the flagship of Admiral Blake's fleet, but a lesser merchant ship.

2 Bodl. MS. Rawl A 261 f. 39 Cromwell to Mehmed IV, 25 Mar. 1654

3 See above, p. 63.

4 Rawl MSS. A 261 f. 56 Cromwell to Bendish, 6 Nov. 1655

5 Thurloe, V pp. 190-92 Bendish to the Protector, 7 Jul. 1656; p. 201 Lawrence to Thurloe, 10 Jul. 1656.

securely in office. Another letter was sent from Cromwell and in December 1656, Bendish was able to report that he had seen the new vizier about the 'George' and the latter was going to forward the letter to Mehmed IV.¹ The lack of influence which the Porte held over its suzerain states prevented this and many other cases from being resolved. The Ottomans felt this lack of control and attempted to conceal it by showing clemency in lesser piracy matters. The final audience which Bendish had with the vizier over the matter of the 'George' demonstrates this point well. To atone for the lack of success on the 'George', the Porte procured the release of another small English ship, the 'Hopeful Endeavour', which had been taken off the North African coast in retaliation for Blake's attack on Tunis.²

This policy of meeting a lesser request instead of answering the major concern was the best Bendish could hope for this situation. It was an improvement on the more general promises that the Porte had given in the past. In the 1630s Peter Wych had been given promises that the Kapudan Paşa would instruct the Algiers fleet to observe the piracy agreement more strictly. Wych considered this inadequate but recognised that the Porte was powerless to do more.³

It was difficult to make cases an Ottoman priority when the Porte faced more pressing foreign policy concerns such as the Baghdad campaign against the Safavids (1629-31) or the war with the Venetians (1645-69). Wych had realised that the frequency with which Viziers were changed affected success. He noted that:

'All orrations are onlie treated and managed with the Great Vizier and he for the most parte cutt off at one time or other and then all other ministers are ignorant

1 PRO SP/97/17 f. 146 Cromwell's second letter to the Sultan on the George; Thurloe, VI pp. 699-702 Bendish to Protector. I contest that this letter has been misdated 1657 and actually refers to December 1656. In the letter, Lawrence had only recently left the Porte and the case of the 'George' was still in hand. The Ottomans were preparing a land attack against the Venetians in revenge for a substantial sea defeat earlier in the year, probably that of July 1656.

2 Thurloe, V pp. 725-6 Bendish to Thurloe, Dec. 1656. The ship is also called the Hopeful Employment but as Kenneth Andrews has pointed out in his Ships, Money and Politics (Cambridge, 1991) p. 47 n. 44, it was not uncommon for ships to be known by a variety of similar names.

3 PRO SP97/15 f. 188 Wych to Secretary Coke, 6 Apr. 1633.

of what formerlie passed and then it will alwaies rest in the breast and disposition of the minister in place to leade the marke to his owne byass'.¹

Ambassadors needed to present cases repeatedly to successive ministers to achieve satisfaction, although this became less of a problem when successive Köprülü Grand Viziers restored some stability to appointments from 1656 onwards.

English Seizures of Ottoman Ships

Ambassadors also had the difficult task of pacifying the Porte when English pirates seized Turkish ships. Such cases, while dealt with by the Admiralty Courts in England, could have repercussions for the English community in the Ottoman Empire. They required careful handling through a combination of ambassadorial justification and Crown endorsement.

One case of this kind which temporarily clouded English relations with the Porte occurred in mid August 1629. In two successive incidents, an English ship seized a Turkish ship and then fled to safety in Zante. Wych, the ambassador at the time, noted the first case in a letter to the *Kapudan Paşa*. He reported that he had sent letters to Charles I to try and procure the restitution of the ship, seized by a Captain Braddock, which was a prize originally taken from the Genoese by an Ottoman captain, Hüseyin Paşa. He also asked the Governor of Zante, where the ship had been taken, to judge the case and promised to continue investigations. This was in response to Hasan Pasa, the *Kapudan Paşa's* threats of reprisal if the Ottomans were not given satisfaction.²

Wych's attempts did not not succeed in pacifying the *Kapudan Paşa*, who seized an English ship, the 'Rainbow' a week later. The Ottoman action was understandable as an English ship, the 'Golden Cock', had also seized an Ottoman ship during that week.³

1 PRO SP97/15 f. 178 Wych to Secretary Coke, 6 Oct 1632

2 PRO SP97/14 f. 311 Wych to Captain Paşa, 13 Aug. 1629; CSPV 1629-31 p. 174 Sebastiano Veniero to Doge and Senate, 1 Sept. 1629

3 PRO SP97/14 f. 313 Wych to Lords of Council, 22 Aug. 1629 The *Kapudan Paşa* informed Wych of the second case.

Wych recognised that the Ottomans could justifiably claim provocation. He was not optimistic about the outcome of the situation, fearing that the *Kapudan Paşa* 'who is both powerfull in favor and authority' intended to hound English ships out of the Levant. Wych was most concerned about the lack of action from England, which reflected badly on the English commitment to the capitulations.¹

Lacking directions from the Crown, Wych went through the usual petitions to secure the release of the 'Rainbow'. He managed to obtain a *hatt-i hümayun* (imperial order) from Murad IV, ordering the ship's release and sent it to Chios, demanding that the ship be allowed to continue its journey to Constantinople. Wych realised that, despite obtaining an imperial command, he was still reliant on some action in England to persuade the Ottoman authorities to hand over the 'Rainbow'.²

By mid November, the 'Rainbow' had indeed been brought to Constantinople, but was detained there until it could be exchanged for the Ottoman goods taken by the 'Golden Cock'. Wych informed the Secretary of State, the Earl of Dorchester, that unless the goods of the Ottoman ship were sequestered and returned, the 'Rainbow' would be retained by the Porte. Moreover, the Ottoman authorities were demanding 80,000 dollars in compensation for the ship and the criminal prosecution of the offenders.

Wych, in common with other English ambassadors at the Porte, had little sympathy with English pirates, who jeopardised the wider relations of England with the Porte. He suggested that if the English authorities returned the 'Golden Cock's' goods, it 'will redound to the honour of his Majestie's justice and great satisfaction in this Porte.'³

1 PRO SP97/14 f. 315 Wych to Dorchester, 22 Aug. 1629

2 PRO SP97/14 f. 319 Wych to Dorchester, Sept. 1629: Wych complained that he had given assurances that the Genoese prize captured in the first incident would be restored to the Ottomans and they were beginning to doubt his word in the absence of action from England.

3 PRO SP97/14 f. 335 Wych to Dorchester, 14 Nov. 1629; f. 337 Ibid to Ibid, 28 Nov. 1629

Wych considered that in clear cases of English piracy, the English authorities must not be seen to condone the action, as this would result in a less favourable attitude to the English community by the Ottoman authorities. The Porte actually released the 'Rainbow' once the goods from the Ottoman ship had been sequestered in England but before satisfactory compensation was received, highlighting the privileged position of the English community. John Chandler, Wych's secretary was sent to England on the 'Rainbow' to present formal letters of complaint about the issue from the sultan, the *Kaymakam* and the *Kapudan Paşa*, and to establish when Wych could expect letters from the King to pacify the Porte on the matter of compensation.¹

The goods of the 'Golden Cock' had been sequestered in October by order of the king. The Council ordered the Admiralty Judge to seize the goods and to return the 'four brass murthers' belonging to Ottoman subjects, suggesting that the English authorities themselves wanted to maintain an appearance of observing the capitulations.² Furthermore, instructions to the new consul of Aleppo, John Wandesford, told him to inform Bendish that a commission for the examination of witnesses in the 'Golden Cock' case had been obtained from the Court of Admiralty.³ Matters were complicated by third party involvement, in the form of the Venetians, who claimed that the goods were originally Venetian.⁴ The Porte stood firm on this matter; England and Venice would have to solve the problem of Venetian ownership separately,

1 PRO SP97/14 f. 337 Wych to Dorchester, 28 Nov. 1629: Chandler's mission was promised by Wych to the *Kapudan Paşa* who had made another formal complaint on the matter in December. See CSPV 1629-32 p. 247 Sebastiano Veniero to Doge and Senate, 8 Dec. 1629; p. 256 Ibid to Ibid, 22 Dec. 1629; PRO SP97/14 f. 347 Hassan Kapudan Paşa to Wych, Dec. 1629; SP97/15 f. 7 Wych to Mr. Porter, 22 Jan. 1629/30.

2 A 'murther' was a small piece of ordinance or a ship's cannon, see *Murderer, Murdering Piece* in N. Bailey: *Dictionarum Britannicum* (London, 1730); *Murther* in James A.H. Murray (Ed.): *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principals* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1908)

3 PRO SP105/109 f. 76 Orders in Council, 30 Oct 1629; SP97/15 f. 29 Instructions for John Wandesford, 12 Apr. 1630

4 CSPV 1629-32 pp. 242-43 Giovanni Soranzo, Venetian Ambassador in England to Doge and Senate, 30 Nov. 1629

but the sultan must have compensation for the loss of the ship.

Throughout the next two years, claims and counter-claims to the goods were made by the Porte and the Venetian ambassador in England. Wych remained adamant that the English Crown must resolve the situation or the English community in Constantinople would suffer. He argued that the issue would not be dropped because Murad IV considered it an act of piracy against the Ottoman fleet.¹

Such worries proved unfounded because, unusually, the *Kapudan Paşa* was away in Greece, mustering troops for a revival of the Baghdad campaign. Wych's warnings eventually had some effect and he received a copy of the order of the king's commissioners of the Admiralty concerning the 'Golden Cock' case.² In the autumn the Porte was still making efforts to press its claim by presenting the English Ambassador with a *buyuruldu* concerning the legitimacy of the Ottoman claim.³

The issue was eventually resolved when the Admiralty Court decided in favour of the Ottoman claimants. A translation of a discharge note of the case from Murad IV confirmed the English action. It was given:

'for as much as all the saide goods and merchandizes by the saide John Barker taken out of the said *sattia* and all intierelie arrived at our Imperiall Port and the same delivered into our royall treasurie by the hands of your said Ambassador and that of the particularities of the said goods and of the *sattia*, there resteth noe farther pretence or demande against the said Barker, having recieved for the same full and entire satisfaction.'⁴

This case demonstrates that the English could obtain fair treatment if they persevered. Wych, who achieved some successes in clear-cut cases of Turkish piracy, recognised that obstinacy by the

1 PRO SP97/15 f. 53 Wych to [Dorchester], 15 Oct. 1630

2 PRO SP97/15 f. 102 Wych to Dorchester, 12 Jun. 1631

3 PRO SP97/15 f. 115 Wych to Dorchester, 24 Jul. 1631; f. 128 Wych to Dorchester, 31 Oct. 1631

4 PRO SP105/109 f. 79 Discharge of the Business of Barker, A.H. 1041

Porte was generally caused by personality clashes with public figures and that this did not affect the long-term relationship between England and the Ottoman Empire. He suggested:

'those ministers which were the oppressors have been cutt of, some slight wranglings we have now and then to hold our privileges and rights, but they are not of that nature as to indanger the trade or trye anie other waie of redress.'¹

Such pragmatism, displayed by both sides in Anglo-Ottoman negotiations on piracy, was based on the shared recognition that neither state had full control over all its subjects in the Mediterranean.

The Problem of Captive Englishmen

English ambassadors were also expected to negotiate the release of English captives taken by the Turks in the act of conducting illegal grain export or in acts of English piracy. In this aspect of Mediterranean policy too, negotiations were conducted with an awareness that the English Crown could not always be held responsible for the actions of its subjects.

The English authorities made strenuous attempts to demonstrate that they distanced themselves from such activities through frequent proclamations against piracy and prohibitions on corn trading in the Mediterranean. Ambassadors were particularly reluctant to act for men involved in piracy or prohibited trade since they jeopardised ambassadorial attempts to play down the existence of English piracy in the eastern Mediterranean.

One such case was that of Thomas Sherley who was caught carrying out piracy in the service of the Duke of Tuscany in January 1603. The details of his capture and imprisonment in Constantinople have been well documented and provide a clear picture of the diplomatic means used to free him.²

1 PRO SP97/15 f. 178 Wych to Coke, 7 Dec. 1632

2 For the full story, see Sherley: Discourse and the romanticised version in Anthony Nixon: The Three English Brothers (London, 1607). This is edited and analysed in A.D. Alderson: 'Sir Thomas Sherley's Piratical Expedition to the Aegean and his Imprisonment in Constantinople' Oriens 9 i 1940 pp. 1-40.

Sherley's guilt was clear and this affected his treatment by English representatives in the region. From the time he was handed over to the Ottoman authorities at Chalkis and during his imprisonment there, Sherley received no attention from the English consul at Patras. He also received no assistance from the ambassador for several months after he was transferred to Constantinople.

Both the consul and the ambassador, Henry Lello (1597-1606) did not want to get involved in a case concerning an English mercenary acting for another state. Lello was also reluctant to bring to the Porte's attention a case which demonstrated English contraventions of the capitulations when he was negotiating their renewal. Nevertheless, he protected Sherley to a degree, visiting him in prison and preventing Sherley from placing himself in debt to the Grand Vizier with illegal and probably fruitless pledges of money.

Lello took on the case once the capitulations were secure but was hampered by a hiatus in Grand Viziers and the absence of the newly appointed Vizier, Malkoç Ali Paşa, in Egypt, where he had been Beylerbey. In his absence, Lello secured an audience with the *Kaymakam* in November 1603. He made a personal appeal to him and, when told that the prisoner was the sultan's prisoner, presented a formal petition for Sherley's liberty. This appears to have succeeded although the order was countermanded through the influence of the French before Sherley could be released.¹

With this set-back, Lello could do little more until the arrival of the *Kapudan Paşa* (Yusuf Sinan Paşa) and the Grand Vizier at the Porte. They arrived in December, and before Lello was able to present the case, Malkoç-Ali Paşa summoned Sherley to the Divan. Although Sherley complained that the English embassy neglected him by not sending a representative, it is possible that he was summoned unannounced. The Grand Vizier wanted to deal with him before leaving Constantinople to take command of the Hungarian campaign, a post to which he had recently been

¹ See Boies Penrose: *Sherlaian Odyssey* (Taunton, 1938) p. 40

appointed by the new sultan, Ahmed I. The English were caught unawares and Sherley was saved from execution by the Venetian ambassador who had earlier been asked by James I to 'exert his great influence with the Porte in order to secure Sherley's liberation.'¹ The Vizier commuted his original execution order, instead sending Sherley to the *Yedikule Hisarı* (Seven Towers Fortress).

Lello achieved better results in low-level diplomacy, recompensing Sherley by alleviating his living conditions. He wrote to Secretary Salisbury that Sherley's freedom could be bought if funds were forthcoming. He was unable to act further until reinforced with letters from the Crown, because he did not hold personal influence at the Porte. Sherley's father, who raised a ransom for his son, obtained such a letter but it was lost in transit. Sherley bought better accommodation within the prison with his ransom funds but diplomatic efforts had to wait until a second king's letter, obtained by Sherley's father in April 1605, arrived in Constantinople.²

The contents of this Crown petition, which reinforced Lello's ambassadorial petitions, were especially important, given the awkward background to Sherley's imprisonment. James I did not outline the case in his letter but concentrated on the perceived innocence of Sherley, who,

'had committed no crime against your Majesty, empire and subjects, or not a very serious crime (if indeed he admits any crime); and that severe penalties have already been sufficiently suffered by him.'³

The letter subtly suggested that the Crown had no knowledge of any crime performed by Sherley and left the matter in the sultan's hands by concluding that 'he is our subject, and on that account ought to be given up to us, unless he deserved this punishment for some shameful

1 CSPV 1603-07 pp. 34-5 no. 56 Giovanni Carlo Scaramelli, Venetian Secretary in England to Doge and Senate, 22 May 1603: James I's overtures to the Venetians on this matter suggest that the English authorities recognised that Lello did not wield the same authority at the Porte as his predecessor Edward Barton.

2 The letter is analysed in E. Denison Ross: 'A Letter from James I to the Sultan Ahmad' BSOAS VII (1933-35) pp. 299-306.

3 Ross: Letter p. 305

crime.’¹

The king, with this letter, tacitly admitted that he did not have full control over the actions of this citizen. Though petitioning for a specific case, he was making a wider appeal to Ahmed I’s compassion within the terms of the capitulations and the Anglo-Ottoman accord they encompassed. The letter and a bribe had the desired effect and Sherley was freed in December after being formally released by the *Divan*.

Despite Lello’s reluctance to be involved in a case where an Englishman was the guilty party, he followed the same steps for this guilty prisoner as those for innocent victims. The main difference was that the actual events leading up to the case were glossed over and petitions concentrated on the clemency of the sultan.²

The motivation for such diplomatic involvement was to prevent English prisoners from being used as bargaining chips by the Ottoman authorities during important negotiations such as the renewal of capitulations or discussions on the treatment of the English community by Ottoman officials. Lello was fortunate that the Sherley case did not affect his renewal of the capitulations.

Other ambassadors faced a greater challenge from such incidents. In Peter Wych’s residence, the case of two English galleons taken by the *Kapudan Paşa* while conducting an illegal trade in grain had more serious consequences for the English community in Constantinople, although once again, the Anglo-Ottoman relationship itself survived this temporary souring of relations. The capture took place at the end of June or the beginning of July 1633, as it was reported by the Venetian Proveditore of Cerigo on 4 July.³ He described a battle between the Turkish fleet and two English *bertons* in the channel of Chios which resulted in the death of the

¹ Ross: Letter p. 305

² Lello reported that the sultan had released Sherley on the grounds that ‘notwithstanding this man’s fault, I present him to the King of England.’ See PRO SP97/5 f. 44 Lello to Salisbury, 19 Dec. 1605.

³ CSPV 1632–36 p. 121 no. 171, Proveditore of Cerigo to Doge and Senate, 4 July 1633

Kapudan Paşa.¹

This account was obviously second-hand as the *Kapudan Paşa* was well enough to write a letter to the Porte outlining his version of events. The English ambassador, Peter Wych, sent the Ottoman complaint to the Levant Company on 10 August, after being presented with it when he went to petition the Porte about the enslavement of English sailors from the two ships. The Porte informed Wych that:

'having understood of two ships of enemies that were in the Bay of Cassandra lading of corn, he [Kapudan Paşa] made thither; which ships, discovering the fleet, weighed anchor and set sail, putting out a flag of defiance, in every way prepared them for fight'²

The defiance of the English ships, the 'Hector' and the 'William and Ralph' on meeting the Ottoman fleet was corroborated by the report of the Venetian ambassador at Constantinople.³ While this account exaggerated Ottoman casualties, the Kapudan Paşa's ship had to put in to Negroponte for repairs, and janissary reinforcements had to be ordered before the fleet could set out again.⁴

Wych was determined to pre-empt the Kapudan Paşa's return and petition for the release of the English crews. He anticipated being forced to pay the ransom demanded by the Porte to free the men but presented his arguments to the Porte in the usual way. He based his petition on the grounds of breach of the capitulations:

'for though they goe unadvisedlie and contrarie to his Majestie's approbation upon

1 A berton was a type of gunboat, see Henry & Renée Kahane & Andreas Tietze: *The Lingua Franca of the Levant* (University of Illinois, 1958) pp. 106-8

2 Wych's first report (PRO SP97/15 f. 198 Wych to Secretary of State, Coke, 3 Jul. 1633) lacked detail. First-hand information came in a written plea from one of the English sailors captured in the battle: PRO SP97/15 f. 204 Captain Thomas Spaight to [Wych], Jul. 1633 and in the letter of complaint to Murad IV from the Kapudan Paşa: PRO SP97/15 f. 206 Wych to [Secretary of State].

3 For the background to the mercantile status of these ships, see CSPD 1628 p. 302; CSPD 1627-8 p. 306.

4 CSPV 1632-36 p. 124 no. 176 Piero Foscarini, Venetian Ambassador at Constantinople to the Doge and Senate 13 Jul. 1633.

corne voyages, yet they are gone to buy itt with theire monies and not to steale it, and then let the prohibition and damage be upon the people of the countries that sell it.’¹

The severity of the *Kapudan Paşa*’s complaint blocked this path to free the captives, but Wych gained an imperial order instructing the *Kapıcı ağa* of the *Kapudan Paşa*’s house, where three of the slaves had been sent, to treat them well. Although Wych continued to argue that the English captains were not acting illegally, he had to tread a careful line between protecting English subjects and appearing to endorse their actions.

The English authorities were aware of the problems involved in this particular case. They had taken steps as early as April 1631 to prohibit corn export from Ottoman territories. This action was the result of a warning from Wych that Murad IV was clamping down on the prohibited trade with naval patrols in the Mediterranean.² The English authorities were keen to distance themselves from such contraventions although they were aware of continued English involvement in the trade.³

Secretary Coke, writing in November, noted that Crown letters were on their way to the sultan, Vizier and Mufti demanding justice and freedom for the men. However, he stressed that caution must be used in handling the petition, instructing:

’You must take care not to engage the whole Company as interested in this action or as justifying the proceedings of those ships... but must only defend them as his Majesty’s subjects oppressed and wronged... and that intercourse between the states may not be discouraged or interrupted.’⁴

1 PRO SP97/15 f. 206 Wych to [Secretary of State], 10 Aug. 1633

2 It is not clear why Murad IV tightened up the prohibitions against corn exports. It may have been part of his general policy of law enforcement or a result of the personal zeal of his *Kapudan Paşas*, especially Bostancı-Ca’fer Paşa (1632–4) and Deli-Hüseyn Paşa (1634–5).

3 PRO SP97/15 f. 92 Order of Council to Stay Ships Going to the Archipelago for Corn, 6 Apr. 1631. Wych reported that despite the ban, some Levant Company ships had headed towards the Hellenic archipelego to ship corn at the end of June. PRO SP97/15 f. 122 Wych to Lords of Council, 21 Aug. 1631.

4 PRO SP97/15 f. 221 Secretary of State to Wych, 14 Nov. 1633

This echoed the form of the Crown letter sent to secure the release of Thomas Sherley. In this case, however, the Secretary of State encouraged some reference to the events as the English argument was to be that, under the capitulations, English ships had free right of entry to all Ottoman ports. The Ottoman attack had surprised the English ships within this area, forcing them to defend themselves before giving an account of their actions.¹

Wych realised that this approach would not work, since it was becoming apparent that the English ships had indeed attacked first without saluting the *Kapudan Paşa* or announcing themselves to him.² The *Kapudan Paşa* was also stirring up trouble against the English community and would block any more official petitions on the matter.

Wych attempted to reconcile the *Kapudan Paşa* and obtain the release of the English captives through a more informal approach, using some members of the *Kapudan Paşa's* household and the Dutch ambassador to broker a meeting with him. Despite disagreement on the intention of the English ships, Wych managed to part on friendly terms, helped undoubtedly by the substantial gift which the English community had provided to rehabilitate themselves with this important public figure.³

Wych's success was shortlived because the day after the meeting, all foreign merchants were imprisoned and had their houses searched and sealed on pretence of searching for arms. The episode of the English corn ships, together with the French ambassador's attempt to build a new chapel in his house, was cited by the Venetians as a reason for this vicious backlash against the foreign communities in Constantinople.⁴

1 Ibid

2 PRO SP97/15 f. 243 Wych to Coke, 5 Mar. 1634

3 PRO SP97/15 f. 235 Wych to Coke, 25 Jan. 1634

4 See above p. 143 ff. for ambassadors' actions on the imprisonment and arbitrary inspection of merchants and their houses. Accusations of English blame came from the Venetian Secretary in England, Francesco Zonca, in a report of a conversation with Secretary Windebank, of 8 September 1634. See CSPV 1632-36 p. 273 no. 349.

It seems that the most immediate source of the conflict was the French ambassador's illegal building project, since this was pulled down during the imprisonment of the merchants. The *Kapudan Paşa*, who took on the role of intermediary between the ambassadors and the sultan, reassured Wych that 'all should goe well' for the English.¹ However, the English case may have been a secondary cause of the attack on Western merchants, as Wych found his path firmly blocked when he presented Crown letters in late March. The *Kaymakam* reported that:

'the Grand Signior would not be persuaded thereby to give them libertie, butt fell into greate rage and swore that if I [Wych] pressed the business anie further, he would cause them all to be putt to death.'²

Wych was prepared to wait until Murad IV's rage died down before pressing the case again, but on each subsequent occasion Murad was equally angry. Wych was forced to negotiate with the *Kapudan Paşa* with bribes for the release of the captives. He did not trust the *Kapudan Paşa* but he had most influence at the Porte, 'all other ministers havinge bin cutt off and displaced and those in place are his associates.' The process was slower than official negotiations and although Wych had some success, he could not prevent the death in captivity of one of the ships' captains, Wyld.³ Even with his continual efforts, thirty men still remained in captivity when Charles I recalled him in July 1638.⁴

Although the case had few long-term effects on relations between England and the Ottoman Empire, in the short-term it jeopardised their relationship. The Company suspended trade with the Ottoman Empire from July to September 1634 and this was undoubtedly a bargaining chip against the Porte's unusual action against the English community.

The Company's hidden agenda behind this suspension was to buy time in the selection of

1 PRO SP97/15 f. 235 Wych to Coke, 25 Jan. 1634

2 PRO SP97/15 f. 249 Wych to Secretary of State, 27 Mar. 1634

3 PRO SP97/15 f. 252 Wych to Coke, 24 Apr. 1634

4 PRO SP105/109 f. 84 Charles to Murad IV, Jul. 1638. Charles asked the sultan to release the captives as a special favour to the new ambassador.

a new ambassador to Constantinople. The Company successfully used the affair as an excuse to delay sending the new, Crown-appointed ambassador, Sackville Crow (1639-47), who did not meet their approval.¹ They argued, with some justification, that sending an ambassador with official presents at such a time could be viewed as acceptance of the unfavourable conditions suffered by merchants in Constantinople.² They did not press for Wych to be recalled, realising that the Porte was unlikely to let him go until his successor arrived.³

As the situation in Constantinople calmed, so did the fervour of the Company in England. They had succeeded in delaying the commission of Crow, and hoped to change the king's choice to one which favoured the merchants. Moreover, despite their claims that Mediterranean trade was declining, commerce with the Ottoman Empire was successful enough for merchants to brave the temporarily uncertain conditions in Constantinople. Indeed, Wych repeatedly noted in his correspondence that English trade was flourishing. Merchants were keen not to suspend trading for too long, fearing that they would lose out to increasingly fierce Dutch competition. Once again, the issue was gradually dropped in favour of the continued goodwill of Anglo-Ottoman commerce.

Both the case of Thomas Sherley and that of the 'Hector' and 'William and Ralph' demonstrate that the English ambassador followed a well established procedure of petitioning the Porte, even in cases where Englishmen had acted dubiously. Stress was always laid on the clemency of the Porte and the integrity of the capitulations. Not all cases were resolved, a few provoked a harsh reaction from the Porte, and much depended on the strength and interest of the key public figures: the sultan, the Grand Vizier and the *Kapudan Paşa*. Nevertheless, the English

1 CSPD 1634-5 p. 208 Charles I to Governor, Deputy and Assistants of Levant Company, 13 Sept. 1634

2 This was the same argument later used by Bendish when Aleppo was suffering similar contraventions of the capitulations, See above p. 63.

3 CSPV 1632-36 p. 241-2 no. 313 Francesco Zonca, Venetian Secretary in England to Doge and Senate, 7 Jul. 1634.

ambassador continued to petition for such cases, regularly reinforced with letters from the Crown. Although the English Crown might rather ignore the Porte, it found itself increasingly supporting ambassadorial efforts to maintain the interests of Englishmen in Ottoman territory.

The Slavery Problem

For Englishmen taken captive either by Barbary or Ottoman ships, ambassadors had another recourse if the petition system failed them. The outcry which accompanied the enslavement of an Englishman was considerable, making it imperative to an ambassador's standing at home that he acted to free as many English slaves as possible.

Indeed, ambassadors took the number of captives they had personally freed as one measure of the success of their residence. Paul Pindar (1612–20), who was otherwise critical of Thomas Glover's residence (1606–12) commended him for freeing many slaves in his time 'as is the manner of all Imbassadors as myselfe hath done at least 30 since my coming.'¹ Glover, when defending himself against charges of collusion with Spain, claimed to have rescued 300 Christians from slavery.²

A considerable amount of ambassadorial time and money was spent, not in negotiations at the Porte, but in the slave entrepôts of Constantinople, buying slaves to free them. In 1632, Wych (1628–38) claimed to have freed all English captives in Ottoman territory but acknowledged 'yt hath cost me monie, for nothings is obteyned heere for curtesie.'³ Bendish described how, once a year, most English captives were brought to Constantinople to be sold to the sultan. He argued that with sufficient resources, he could free the majority because the Ottomans preferred

1 PRO SP97/7 f. 36 Pindar to Sir Dudley Carleton, 30 Apr. 1613

2 CSPD 1611–18 p. 170 no. 26 Isaac Wake to Dudley Carleton, 12 Feb. 1613

3 PRO SP97/15 f. 166 Wych to Secretary of State [probably Coke as Dorchester had recently died.], 29 Jun. 1632

to buy cheaper slaves from the Black Sea Coast.¹

The main obstacle to this was the lack of funds available. Ambassadors made regular pleas for contributions towards their task. However, as Thomas Roe (1622–28) had discovered, the issue, while an emotive one in England, was not immediate enough to generate financial support. It was diplomatically frustrating to have to resort to simple slave sales rather than exchange or negotiation but it was often the only way to achieve a successful redemption for victims of piracy.

English involvement in the Venetian War

English involvement in the Venetian war (1645–69) was another diplomatic morass where ambassadors had to deal with individual cases. Ottoman dependency on the Barbary fleet intensified and the authorities became more aggressive in their pursuit of foreign pirates. This is not the place to narrate the general chronology of the war which was inconclusive for much of the period before 1660.² In general, the swings in favour and against the Ottoman Empire did not affect English policy although the English community were vulnerable if the war was going badly for the Turks.

Bendish, as ambassador during the main period of English involvement, had to tread the tightrope between the Venetian and Ottoman authorities to safeguard English trade through the Dardanelles, and to prevent the Turks requisitioning English vessels.

English involvement took the form of a mercenary element in the Venetian navy and a mainly-enslaved element in the Ottoman navy. The Commonwealth authorities were prepared to turn a blind eye to English participation on the Venetian side but they were incensed by Ottoman seizures of their merchant ships.

The Porte attempted to force the English to support the Ottoman fleet and refused to accept that English aid to the Venetians was not officially supported. Charles I, in his official

1 Thurloe, VI pp. 252–59 Bendish to Protector, 5 May, 1656.

2 For a chronology, see R.D. Alderson: Naval Wars in the Levant (Liverpool, 1952)

reassertion of Crow's revocation, had emphasised that no English ship or subject was in the service of the Venetians by the command or consent of the king.¹ This was an attempt to safeguard the English community in the Ottoman Empire from any reprisals taken by the Ottomans on the strength of individual breaches.

The English also suffered from the blockades of Constantinople by Venetian ships. They had to deny Venetian claims that English vessels were supporting the Ottoman fleet. Bendish could do little but complain to the Company, who in turn complained to the Commonwealth authorities. A letter from the Company of 15 April 1649 to Captain Wild, then consul of Smyrna, suggests that negotiations were going on between the Company and Venice to allow free transport of goods by sea.²

This Company-directed policy is confirmed by a Company memorandum concerning the stopping of ships by the Venetian fleet at Constantinople of 14 July 1649. This argued that none of the English ships which were stopped contained or intended to carry Ottoman soldiers. It concluded that the single English ship which was employed by the Ottomans was forced into it and acted without the consent of the company. It is likely that this information was supplied by Bendish, although correspondence for this period is sparse.³

The Admiralty Court considered charges against several captains accused of carrying Ottoman soldiers in English ships in December 1647. The English authorities wanted to be seen to prevent any English involvement on the Ottoman side. This was not much help to Bendish although it allowed English shipping to move more freely through the Venetian blockades. He had to convince the Porte that the English authorities were not condoning English involvement on the Venetian side either. He needed something more tangible so that Venetians and Ottomans alike

1 PRO SP/105/143 f. 139a Charles I to Sultan, 7 Aug. 1647. Charles was in Parliament's hands by this stage in his reign.

2 CSPD 1649 p. 91 Levant Company to Captain Wild, 15 Apr. 1649

3 PRO SP/105/144 f. 9a The Levant Company Memoriall Touching the stopping of Ships by the Venetian Fleet at Constantinople, 14 Jul. 1649

could perceive an official English policy in the matter.

Bendish and the Company both worked together to this end. The Company petitioned the Council of State and the Admiralty Committee for a proclamation against the use of English ships in the Venetian war. At the same time they requested an endorsement of Bendish as ambassador.¹ The document recommended that Bendish be given new instructions with greater powers in this matter. Neither body responded to the document, probably because they were considering whether to recall Bendish.

By January 1651, Bendish himself was asking the Council of State for assistance over the matter of English ships in the Venetian navy. He warned that English involvement was antagonising the Ottomans. The Commonwealth authorities still failed to demonstrate a general policy in this matter. There are several possible reasons for their lack of action, all connected to government ambivalence towards Bendish, the Company and the Mediterranean situation.

The Commonwealth authorities were cautious about endorsing Bendish as ambassador, as letters empowering him to act in the Commonwealth's name on this issue would do. They did not want to be seen to dance to the Company's tune too often in the selection of ambassadors. They were as keen as Charles I had been to retain complete control over ambassadorial appointments and considered Bendish too sympathetic to the Company. It is possible that they were pursuing a deliberate non-interventionist policy but this does not tally with their later policies and it was more likely that they considered other issues of greater priority than the Ottoman problem.

The inaction of the Commonwealth Authorities left Bendish to deal with the situation at the Porte alone. In December 1651, matters reached their first crisis. The Vizier, Gürcü Mehmed Paşa, tried to force the resident ambassadors to sign statements swearing that they and their nations would not participate in the Venetian navy. Despite Bendish's attempts to avoid signing, the Grand Vizier would not be deflected from the issue and signed it in his name. Bendish could not allow this and used the principles of the developing western tradition of international law to

¹ PRO SP/97/17 f. 44 Levant Company Petitions, 1650

argue that a public minister could not be coerced into signing anything against his will. He failed to achieve the full withdrawal of the document but managed to secure a favourable concession. The Vizier agreed to provide Bendish with a copy, endorsed to the effect that the oath would not prejudice English trade.¹ The Ottomans were, in effect, forcing Bendish to agree to a policy which he had been urging his government to endorse.

In diplomatic terms it was disturbing that the Ottoman authorities could force this stance but more worrying that Bendish received no letters of condemnation of this incident to deliver to Mehmed IV from the Protector. An ambassador not fully endorsed by his state was in a precarious situation.

Bendish exhibited his own personal diplomatic strength at the Porte in the concessions he won. There were allegations that Bendish conceded more than matters of principle to the Porte. Among other allegations, the anonymous Articles of Treason of 1651 suggested that he had promised a fleet to the Ottoman authorities and agreed to provide carpenters and generally assist the Turks with ships against the Venetians.² Bendish reassured Cromwell that he had given short shrift to the vizier when it was suggested that England might provide ships for the Ottoman fleet.³ Bendish had cited cases of English ships independently assisting Ottoman ships to appease the Ottomans over the use of the Northumberland, Margaret, Freeman and Samaritan by the Venetians.⁴ He was forced to use such tactics because he had no support from the Commonwealth authorities.

Bendish's single-handed action was reflected in his frequent direct dealings with the victims of vessels captured by Venetian and Ottoman alike. Without an official policy on the

1 PRO SP/97/17 f. 70 Bendish to Council of State, 22 Dec. 1651

2 PRO SP/97/17 f. 76 Articles of Treason [c. 1651]

3 Thurloe, VI 699-702 Bendish to Protector, 23 Dec. See above p. 208.

4 PRO SP/97/17 f. 82 Bendish to Council of State, 31 May 1652. The involvement of Levant Company ships on both sides has not yet been adequately studied but it is clear that several merchant ships did act for the Ottomans on a mercenary basis.

Venetian war, incidents like that of Geoffrey Davies, the son of Prince Charles' barber, who was captured by the Turks while serving under the Venetians, had to be treated as matters of piracy.¹

In most cases the only hope of release was through the usual slave purchase used by the embassy to release victims of piracy. Bendish needed that official endorsement of his position for which he had been struggling if he was to be able to protect English vessels more forcibly.

In 1656, he succeeded when the Council of State's previous inaction was transformed into a policy of intervention. This sudden change was a result of the new strength that the English possessed in the Mediterranean following Blake's campaign. It also marked the acceptance of Bendish as an ambassador fully empowered by the Commonwealth authorities. Bendish was bombarded with petitions for individual cases and with general policy instructions.

In December 1656, he received instructions from Cromwell stating that the capture of Venetian ships, including English ships, injured trade. Bendish was instructed to ascertain which ships were involved, to make excuses for them and to continue to inform Cromwell about action taken.² Such interest and intervention by the Commonwealth authorities came not a moment too soon. The massive defeat of the Ottomans by the Venetians the previous summer of 1656 had spurred the Ottomans into more desperate attempts to build a new fleet and, more importantly, to equip it with experienced men who could navigate the ships. Foreign ships were in great danger of being drafted into Ottoman service.³

There were also moves in Whitehall to condemn the Ottoman action. A memorandum on the seizure of English ships to serve against the Venetians was presented to the Council of State in January 1657. This argued that Anglo-Venetian relations would improve if the English

1 Thurloe, IV pp. 138-40 Lawrence to Protector, 1 Nov. 1655

2 PRO SP97/17 f. 133 Cromwell to Bendish, 23 Dec. 1656

3 For Bendish's personal assessment of the situation, see Thurloe, V p. 190-92 Bendish to Protector, 7 Jul. 1656.

ambassador at the Porte and consuls within the Ottoman dominions were instructed to oppose, and as far as possible, prevent any English involvement in the war on the Ottoman side. The accompanying offer to use the Venetian express dispatch service to deliver such instructions suggests pressure from the Venetian ambassador in England.¹ Nevertheless, the willingness of the Commonwealth authorities to listen to such proposals indicates that they were becoming more concerned about the situation.

Such anxiety seemed justified. In June 1657, Bendish reported that the English ship 'Recovery' had been forced into service with the Ottoman fleet which had left Constantinople on 30 May. Although Bendish commonly asserted forcible drafting as an excuse to protect English ships, this was a genuine case of coercion.²

The case had worrying implications for the English because the Ottoman authorities had defended their action by claiming 'necessity of the state.' Bendish was concerned that this could set a precedent for further similar actions. In fact, such a justification was only used in this case, and did not develop into a policy of asserting Ottoman dominance over eastern Mediterranean shipping.

In general, the Ottomans were wary of coercing English ships into service, except through individual cases of piracy. The success of Blake's Mediterranean fleet, though limited, carried some resonance at the Porte. English trade was still important, despite the internal Company wranglings in the 1640s and early 1650s. The Ottoman authorities were anxious not to encourage English military activity in the Mediterranean, and so the situation for English shipping gradually improved.

On the Venetian side, Bendish could at last depend on complaints to reach the Senate through the usual channels. The English authorities censured the Venetian ambassador in England

1 PRO SP97/17 f. 135 Note on Seizure of English Ships to Serve Against Venice, 8 Jan. 1657

2 For the 'Recovery' case, see Thurloe, VI pp. 354-6, Bendish to the Protector. For earlier allegations of Ottoman pressure on English ships, see B.L. Add. MS. 15750 ff. 32-3 Bendish to Charles I, 1648.

over breaches in the Anglo-Venetian agreement on free movement of English ships, such as that of April 1657 when English ships were searched by Venetians at the mouth of the Bosphorus.¹

By 1660, ambassadors could rely on their right of official presentation, which was granted through the protection of capitulations for both Ottoman territory and the North African vassal states. They could expect to be reinforced by state support in the form of official letters and the threat of military might in the region. This powerful combination, which successive ambassadors had worked hard to develop and maintain, also allowed England to make headway in its broader diplomatic dealings with the Porte.

¹ Thurloe, VI p. 203 Bendish to Thurloe, 16 Apr. 1657

WIDER DIPLOMACY

CHAPTER IX. AN ANTI-HABSBURG ALLIANCE

The negotiations which I have explored thus far have involved routine diplomacy: the daily round of meetings and petitions aimed at securing the protection of the English merchant community and its commerce in the Mediterranean. Some negotiations, such as those extending the capitulations to cover the Barbary States, were on a grander scale. They involved a third party but were still aimed primarily at securing England's immediate national interests and freeing the English Crown from naval responsibilities in the region.

In addition to this low-level diplomacy which formed the bulk of an ambassador's work, he could be called upon to take part in higher-level negotiations which only indirectly involved England. Such negotiations could take the form of an on-going policy initiative, for example English attempts to reduce the power of the Jesuits, or more particularly, specific periods of intense diplomatic activity. In such cases the English ambassador was responsible for coordinating policy at several levels or with several parties at once. The sporadic nature of these negotiations, and the concentration of such high-level diplomacy at various key moments in international affairs, requires a more chronological approach than that employed in earlier chapters. For this reason I will focus on the intense diplomacy of the 1620s.

England's secondary motivations in its relationship with the Ottoman Empire were still guided by national interest. The English sought to retain the status quo within Europe, thus driving at preventing further Habsburg expansion. They also wanted England to be recognised as a leader on the international stage; the Porte proved an ideal place for the English to prove their credentials as a Christian and, more importantly, as a Protestant protector.

To achieve these aims, ambassadors were expected to keep Habsburg delegations out of the Porte when possible and to limit their success when not. They were also expected to support any anti-Habsburg alliances which the Porte made and to help the Porte in its efforts to prevent its central European vassals from turning to the Habsburgs.

English ambassadors rapidly secured a role as recognised leaders of anti-Habsburg machinations at the Porte. They were not alone in these since the French, and the Dutch after

1612, were also keen to contain Habsburg advances but English ambassadors were pre-eminent during this period, especially when French influence began to wane in the 1620s.¹ The English were at an advantage because the Crown permitted them to deal with regular business at the Porte without awaiting instructions, as long as they kept within the confines of English interest.

English ambassadors also benefitted from being maintained by the Company because, unlike the French who had to seek permission to receive funds for negotiations from domestic authorities, funds were immediately available for negotiations. The increasing involvement of English ambassadors in high-level diplomacy, especially in the 1620s and 1630s, partly explains the corresponding rise in merchant demands that the ambassador should be funded by the Crown.

English ambassadors used the Ottoman system well, and the channels of access they opened to the sultan in their routine diplomatic tasks served them well in broader diplomatic issues. It was important that ambassadors promoted the English view on international affairs and gained the sympathy of as many high-ranking officials as possible. The English established contacts with these as soon as they had arrived at the Porte, but quickly learnt that it was difficult to involve the Porte in any campaign outside its own political agenda.

The English had high expectations of their diplomacy with the Porte but were always forced to alter their wider political objectives to take account of the Porte's own concerns. The details of England's first attempt to use the Porte as a strategic ally have been well researched by others and illustrate this problem clearly.² The English believed themselves in a good position to secure Ottoman sympathy against their common enemy, Spain, through Murad III's

¹ This decline in French fortunes at the Porte was closely connected with the debts of the ambassador, de Césy. For details of his debt problem, see above p. 153 ff.

² See Edwin Pears: 'The Spanish Armada and the Ottoman Porte' *EHR* VIII (1893) pp. 439-466. On the Spanish angle, see Susan Anne Skilliter: 'The Hispano-Ottoman Armistice of 1581' in *Iran and Islam* (Ed.) C.E. Bosworth (Edinburgh, 1971) pp. 491-515.

hoca (tutor) Sa'deddin, whom William Harborne (1583-88) had secured as an ally.¹ Indeed, through his influence they gained promises of a security alliance against Spain and prevented the Spanish from renewing a treaty with the Porte. The English were successful in raising the spectre of Ottoman intervention against Spain, but this was the limit of Ottoman involvement in the Anglo-Spanish conflict. The Ottomans never opened a second front to deflect the Spanish from their English campaign because the Porte was more concerned with its eastern borders.

The lesson of the anti-Spanish alliance was learnt quickly and successive ambassadors recognised the limits of Ottoman action. They restricted their anti-Spanish activities to keeping Spanish delegations out of the Porte; this could prove as difficult to achieve as orchestrating active Ottoman involvement. The down-grading of anti-Spanish hostility was, however, partly a reflection of Spain's waning importance in English priorities. By 1623, the containment of the Spanish had become only a sideline to English policy against the growing threat of Habsburg domination in central Europe. It was in this struggle that the English ambassadors realised the limits of their powers and the restrictions which the supra-national diplomacy operating during the Thirty Years War placed upon them.

I have chosen to concentrate on the anti-Habsburg policy of Roe's residence (1622-28) because it demonstrates all the tactics used by English ambassadors in their struggle against the Habsburgs throughout the period, and highlights the problems which ambassadors faced as they tried to influence the priorities of Ottoman foreign policy. This period of English diplomatic activity was especially difficult for the Porte. While the Ottoman authorities were naturally inclined towards an anti-Habsburg approach, pressures from Safavid and Polish neighbours, as well as internal disaffection, prevented the Porte from committing itself to active intervention in Habsburg affairs.

¹ On Sa'deddin's role in the establishment of the English at the Porte and his leadership of an aggressively anti-Spanish element at the Porte, see Akdes Nimet Kurat: 'Hoca Sadeddin Efendinin Türk-İngiliz Münasebetlerinin Tesisi ve Gelişmesindeki Rolü' Fuat Köprülü Armağanı (Istanbul 1953) pp. 305-15; Horniker: 'Anglo-Turkish Relations' pp. 300-301, 308-10.

The Bethlen Gabor Dilemma

The English task was to persuade the Porte to act as a diversion for the Habsburgs from their advance through central Europe. When this was rapidly dismissed as unattainable, the English concentrated on gaining the Porte's permission for its vassal Transylvania to act as the diversion.

The potential of Transylvania as a tool in the anti-Habsburg struggle had been realised in 1619, when Bethlen Gabor usurped the position of Prince of Transylvania and took advantage of the death of the Holy Roman Emperor Matthias to attack Hungary in alliance with Bohemia.¹ This had upset the balance of the buffer zone between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, established by the Treaty of Zsitvatorok (1606).

Initially, Gabor had signed a nine month truce with the Habsburgs to give himself time to consolidate his gains. In doing so, he rejected the vassal status which the Ottomans had established over Transylvania in 1541.² By the beginning of Roe's residence at the Porte in 1622, Gabor had become sufficiently nervous about his Habsburg neighbour to seek to return to the Ottoman fold. By January 1622, he had made peace with the Holy Roman Emperor and was making overtures to the Ottoman Empire for support in a war aimed at driving the Habsburgs from the rest of Hungary.³

In addition to Ottoman displeasure over Gabor's attempts to rule independently, the situation was complicated by the Treaty of Zsitvatorok, which bound the Porte to peace with

1 The pivotal role of the central European vassal states and the Porte's control over them had been recognised by Lello, Glover and Pindar. They had involved themselves in supporting pretenders to the Moldavian throne. See Nicholae Iorga: Anglo-Romanian Relations (Bucharest, 1931); Coulter: 'Status and Activities of the English Ambassadors' pp. 87. On the Bohemian-Transylvanian alliance, see John G. Gagliardo: Germany under the Old Regime 1600-1790 (London, 1991) p. 30.

2 On the foundation and development of Transylvania, see Peter F. Sugar (Ed.) A History of Hungary (Indiana University Press, 1990) pp. 83-99, 121-37; Laszlo Makkai: 'The Crown and the diets of Hungary and Transylvania in the Sixteenth Century' in R.J.W. Evans & T.V. Thomas (Eds.): Crown, Church and Estates: Central European Politics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (London, 1991) pp. 80-91.

3 On the details of the treaty of Nikolsburg with the Emperor, see Kenneth M. Setton: Venice, Austria and the Turks in the Seventeenth Century (Philadelphia, 1991) p. 36

the Habsburgs, and which had been renewed in 1615 for twenty years.¹ The Porte was suspicious of Gabor's motives, fearing (correctly) that if he secured Hungary with their support, he would then attempt to gain autonomy from the Porte. The Porte was already engaged in campaigns against the Poles and skirmishes against the Safavids in 1621 and was not enthusiastic about provoking the Habsburgs to open up another front.

The only way which the Transylvanians could hope to bring the Porte round to their side was to send a messenger to demonstrate their willingness to continue as a vassal. The delegation arrived in January 1622, when the English ambassador was newly arrived at the Porte. In view of the ambiguous stance of James I towards the Palatinate struggle and the fact that Roe had not yet been formally received at the Porte, Gabor's messenger was protected by the Dutch ambassador.²

At this point the Porte was willing to show some support for Gabor to encourage his allegiance and wean him from the Habsburgs. More importantly, the Porte was irritated that the Habsburgs had sent 8000 men to help the Poles in their campaign against the Ottomans. The Ottomans retaliated by sending troops to Hungary but the action was limited as their main priority was to prevent further Habsburg aid being sent to the Poles. Their real concern was to establish peace on the Polish frontier.³

The English were slow to become involved in Transylvanian negotiations at the Porte because of James I's dual dislike of involving the Porte in international affairs and his reluctance to become embroiled in the Palatinate struggle. He continued to stand against parliamentary demands for action and expected his ambassador at the Porte to do likewise. The arrival of the Transylvanian messenger at the Porte had provided Roe with an opportunity to test the waters, to find out if the king was willing to lend support to Gabor's Hungarian

¹ This was only a technical obstacle to Ottoman action. There were frequent breaches of the treaty on both sides, as is evidenced by the necessity to renew the treaty in 1616, 1618, 1625 and 1627 as well as its customary ratification on the accession of the new sultan in 1640. See Setton: Venice p. 43.

² See Negs. p. 13 Relation of Advices, c.9/19 Jan. 1621/2; pp. 13-14 Roe to Lord Admiral, 9/19 Jan. 1621/2; 14-15 Roe to Calvert, 10/20 Jan 1621/2.

³ For Roe's involvement in the establishment of this peace, see below, p. 258 ff.

campaign in the light of his close alliance with the Bohemians. He received an emphatic refusal in April, with instructions that:

'His majestie hetherto would never have anything to doe with him [Gabor], neyther would hee have your lordship take any notice of him or of his affaires, but to leave him unto them that have undertaken the care of them.'¹

This was fully in line with James I's policy of treating the Palatinate war as a separate German problem and concentrating all his efforts on the alliance with Spain. Despite the wishes of Parliament for a more active commitment to the Palatinate war, James still held out for a restoration of the Palatinate through a broad-based diplomatic arrangement.²

The problem for Roe at the Porte was that the Transylvanian view of the central European struggle was far more localised. The Transylvanians had seen Roe's success as a mediator between the Poles and the Ottomans and could not accept that his refusal to help them was part of the same policy. James had committed himself to the Polish mediation because it offered a chance to prove to the Habsburgs that Christian unity could transcend denominational divisions. To the Transylvanians, however, it appeared that England was prepared to help Catholic Poland at the expense of Protestant Transylvania.

Roe was put under strong pressure from the Transylvanian delegation to mediate for them. They tried to cover every possible angle of English interest, pleading that their suit with the sultan was:

'to admonish him forthwith to deliver the Crowne of Hungary to Bethlem Gabor and to restore King Frederick to Bohemia and the provinces dependent.'³

Gabor himself appealed to the desire of the English Crown to lead the Protestant states of Europe by asking for English protection on religious grounds.⁴ The Transylvanians even claimed to be supported by the exiled king of Bohemia, playing on Roe's links with that

1 *Negs.* pp. 28-30 Calvert to Roe, 11 Apr. 1622

2 See Geoffrey Parker: *Thirty Years War* (London. 1984) pp. 63-5.

3 *Negs.* pp. 89-91 Enclosure to Secretary Calvert, [undated]

4 PRO SP97/8 f. 216 Gabor to Roe, 11 Aug. 1622

court.¹

All these appeals were in vain as Roe kept to his brief and stayed out of negotiations, at least publicly. He played a double game to keep himself informed of all aspects of the Transylvanian case. He offered the Transylvanians private advice, thus ensuring that he was informed of any new developments in their plans. At the same time, he explored the mood at the Porte, winning the confidence of the Vizier by discussing the contents of Gabor's letter and promoting the English plan for peace. He played down the Habsburg threat which was the main lever in Gabor's suit and advised the Grand Vizier and *Reisülküttab* that the supposed grand design of an invasion of Ottoman territory through a Spanish, German and Polish alliance did not exist.²

It was easy to dissuade the Porte from a campaign it was reluctant to pursue and could ill afford. Roe's policy also won the approval of James I, who praised him for his 'discreete carriage in that busines.'³ Most importantly, Roe gained the respect of Porte officials as a reliable advisor.

The strategy of winning the confidence of both sides while asserting a neutral position was repeatedly adopted by English ambassadors in their dealings with third parties. It bought them time to assess the situation but placed them in a position where they could act rapidly if necessary. The distance from England gave ambassadors a clear advantage: in this case, the English authorities accepted that Roe was observing English policy and did not question the detail of his dealings with the Porte or the Transylvanians.

As Roe established himself at the Porte and observed the motives behind Gabor's diplomatic efforts, he grew more concerned whether omitting Gabor from the European equation of alliances and conflicts was necessarily in England's interests. There are dangers in using Roe as an example of the pattern of English diplomacy at the Porte because of his

1 PRO SP97/8 f. 254 Roe to Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia 19 Sept. 1622

2 *Negs.* pp. 80-89 Roe to Secretary Calvert, 7 Sept. 1622; PRO SP97/8 f. 248 Roe to Nethersole, 19 Sept. 1622

3 *Negs.* p. 104 James I to Roe, 24 Nov. 1622

strong personal commitment to the Protestant cause. He was clearly frustrated by James' refusal to go to war, complaining to Wotton that maintaining peace had done the Habsburgs a bigger favour than the capture of Heidelberg.¹ However, his doubts about whether to involve himself in the Transylvanian case highlight the diplomatic hazards of involvement in policies beyond the direct interests of the state.

The main problem was that issues looked very different from the Porte than they did in Whitehall. Ambassadors could clearly see the benefits of Ottoman intervention in Europe but could not always persuade the English authorities that such a course was acceptable. This left ambassadors with a dilemma. On the one hand, instructions and information were slow or non-existent so ambassadors could not build a composite picture of English policy: Roe complained in December 1622 that he had not been informed about the Brussels treaty signed that summer and its effects on the Protestant states. He argued that he had lost opportunities for action through his ignorance:

'I suppose it is now too late and my hands were tyed by generall orders which I have obeyed. In the rest I have guided myself in a blind discretion.'²

On the other hand, if ambassadors pursued their own line of policy, they risked the wrath of the English Crown. This had happened to both Henry Lello (1597-1606) and Thomas Glover (1606-12) who had overstepped the mark in their involvement with Moravian pretenders.³

Roe took note of his predecessors' mistakes and trod a middle course. In January 1623, he tentatively suggested a reorientation of policy. He advised Secretary Calvert that if James was forced into war, he could rely on Gabor for support since:

'he will finde meanes to trouble the greatest enemy. The Turks will mainteyne him, because they feare he may revolt to the emperour, and hee seekes any refuge, because hee stands between two factions, an enemy to one, neglected of the other, but it is easy to assure him if his majestie affect it.'⁴

Clearly, Roe was beginning to consider the possibilities of harnessing Gabor's security needs

1 PRO SP97/9 f. 5 Roe to Wotton, 10/20 Jan. 1623

2 PRO SP97/8 f. 291a Roe to Buckingham, 13 Dec. 1622

3 See Coulter: 'Status and Activities of English Ambassadors' p. 87

4 PRO SP97/10 f. 58 Roe to Calvert, 25 Jan. 1623

to the general Protestant cause through the mediation of the English. He was convinced that unless policy was changed, the advantage would go to the Habsburgs, although he was less convinced about Gabor's sincerity than his missive to Calvert suggests. He confided to Dudley Carleton at the Hague that even after watching Gabor's movements closely, he could not make a clear assessment of his motives or policy intentions. He recognised that unless Gabor was supported against the Habsburgs, he could very well turn away from the Porte again and could 'prove a notable instrument either of much good or evil.'¹

There was also the danger that Roe would lose respect at the Porte, since he was no longer in an informed position to advise Porte officials on the situation. The Porte was inclining more towards an active campaign in Hungary by the spring of 1623, and Roe complained that he was 'suspected a pentioner to their enemyes' after refusing to urge James to join the military campaign to recover the Palatinate.²

The Porte continued to pursue its own goals with Roe very much on the side-lines. He was reduced to the state of a mere observer while the Habsburgs attempted to make peace with the Porte in the summer of 1623. Roe recognised that the Porte was playing its own double hand: it was buying time from the Habsburgs by making overtures of peace, while mobilizing Ottoman forces on the Hungarian border.³

In fact, once the Porte admitted the Habsburg delegation in November 1623, it became disinclined to pursue its aggressive policies, thus saving Roe from standing out against Ottoman policy. The Habsburg ambassador had raised the possibility of a treaty between the Porte and Spain at his second audience. This would clearly free Spain to concentrate on its European interests but was attractive to the Porte because it would free Barbary ships to aid the Ottoman fleet in its struggle against the continuing rebellion of the Emir of Sidon.⁴ If the Porte made peace with Spain and renewed its treaty with the Habsburgs, it would be free to

1 Negs. pp. 122-27 Roe to Carleton, 22 Jan. 1623

2 Negs. pp. 151-53 Roe to James I, 20 May 1623

3 Negs. pp. 169-171 Roe to Calvert, 9 Aug. 1623

4 See above, p. 190.

concentrate on its eastern boundaries where the revolt of Abaza Mehmet Paşa in Anatolia, and Safavid incursions, were giving cause for concern.

As the Porte and the Habsburgs appeared to be growing near agreement, Gabor was forced to change tactics again. He negotiated a ten month truce with the Habsburgs at the beginning of 1624 to win him time to build up support. He tried to secure a role as mediator in any treaty between the Porte and the Habsburgs to formalise his position as a balancing element in the region.

Gabor recognised, however, that any gains in the treaty would be short-term ones and by spring 1624 he was seeking support from the Ottomans again. He was permitted to use the Tatars and the Ottoman frontier fortresses of Buda, Canila, Angria and Timisoara but despite the Porte's eagerness to retain Gabor as a vassal, they needed to renew the treaty with the Habsburgs to pursue their own political objectives in the east. Once again, Gabor found himself poised precariously between the Habsburgs and Ottomans. He had signed a truce with the former and was in alliance with the latter but in an exposed position across their front line. The time was ripe for another shift in Gabor's policy.

The swings in Gabor's allegiance and the vacillation in the policy of the Porte enabled Roe to develop a policy which he could coax the English authorities to accept. He made a clear assessment of Gabor's motivations and the predicament which the prince of Transylvania faced, noting:

'his motions and affections are principally directed upon his owne advancement or safetye. He is seated betweene two opposite great states and must encline to one of them, if he have no other support...in all his wayes, he hath only sought out some on whom to relye. It were a good councill to reconcile and take him home among those of his owne religion.'¹

He suggested that Gabor could be drawn into a protective alliance with the Protestant states through a marriage alliance to counter the matches sought by Gabor from the Habsburgs. This was vital to prevent Gabor's further disillusionment after his disappointment over aid packages promised by the Dutch and the Duke of Brunswick.

¹ *Negs.* pp. 238-9 Roe to Queen of Bohemia, 15/25 May 1624: Roe evidently still feared a rebuff from James for his policy proposal since he tried it out first on James' daughter, to whom he owed a personal loyalty, second only to that he paid to the English crown.

Roe's policy reflected the urgency of the situation. The Porte's patience with its vassal was wearing thin. It had already distanced itself from the Transylvanian-Habsburg struggle and had demanded five years' tribute to help fund its campaigns against Poland, the Cossacks and the Safavids, arguing 'You have wasted the Grand Signor's treasure in your own quarrel and must repay it.'¹ Roe was certain that unless Gabor was secured against the Habsburgs, he could well seek continuous truces with them, leaving the Habsburg forces free to concentrate on their northern borders.

It is clear that Roe's continual pressure on the English authorities eventually paid off. While he was outlining the above plan to Elizabeth of Bohemia, Calvert sent him new instructions informing him that the king had changed his policy towards the Habsburgs. Roe was instructed to act on Gabor's behalf at the Porte, to secure his services against the Habsburgs.²

Roe was prevented from putting this policy into effect immediately because the tribute demands of the Porte had driven Gabor into Habsburg arms even before he had received his instructions. Roe had to content himself with discovering the extent of Gabor's allegiance to the Habsburgs. This was a difficult task as the Transylvanian delegation did not admit that a treaty had been signed, even while Gabor attempted to negotiate a Habsburg marriage alliance in Vienna, for fear of antagonising the Porte.

Ironically, Roe, who had been so convinced of the need to work with Gabor, had to act against him at the Porte to win him away from the Habsburgs. He made the Porte aware of the true situation and helped to orchestrate a reprimand from the sultan to Gabor.³ By the beginning of 1625, Gabor was prepared to break with the Habsburgs and Roe had to prevent him from turning back wholeheartedly to Ottoman support. Roe's aim was to detach Gabor from both the Porte and Habsburgs and realign him with the anti-Habsburg states.

By the end of March 1625, Transylvanian-Habsburg peace talks had broken down over

1 Negs. pp. 241-43 Advices from Constantinople, 15 May 1624

2 Negs. p. 244 Calvert to Roe, 18 May 1624

3 Negs. p. 306 Roe to Calvert, 31 Oct. 1624

the issue of frontier forts and the Porte had broken off negotiations for the prolongation of the Ottoman-Habsburg treaty. Roe was in a good position to press Gabor into service for the anti-Habsburg states. Gabor was no longer bound to peace with the Habsburgs through his own treaty or by extension of an Ottoman treaty.

Roe had worked hard to disengage Transylvania from dependence on the Porte, aiming to remove a possible impediment to an alliance between Gabor and anti-Habsburg states: the issue of using Muslim Ottoman forces to contribute to Gabor's struggle against the Habsburg Christians. However, Gabor was less prepared to commit himself thoroughly to the anti-Habsburg states and continued to hedge his bets. He sought the Porte's permission to join the league of German princes, around which anti-Habsburg support was focused and requested the dissolution of the Treaty of Zsitvatorok. He also wanted the tribute arrears remitted and to gain Ottoman military support.

Such double-dealing was a blow to Roe's policy, especially when he learnt from the *Kaymakam* that the Grand Vizier, Hafiz Ahmed Paşa, was hostile to Gabor's bid to join a league of princes 'least it should make the prince too proud, and endanger his faith by change of his dependency.'¹ The Porte granted the petitions which bound Gabor closer to the Ottomans and rejected those which would have released him from the Porte. This turned the Transylvanian case into an issue about the Porte's control over its vassal. Roe had wanted to play this aspect down but had under-estimated the expectations which the Porte held for its vassal states at a time when it found itself vulnerable on several fronts.

Another facet of this Ottoman vulnerability was the desire to renew peace with the Habsburgs to take the pressure off the northern border. This was achieved at Buda in June 1625, and, if ratified, would have bound Transylvania once again to peace with the Habsburgs. The situation was complicated still further by the arrival in July of a Spanish envoy to treat for peace with the Porte. The Spanish aimed to shore up the Catholic position, leaving Gabor in an untenable position.

Roe was unsure how far the shift in English policy applied to Spain and so, once again,

¹ *Negs.* pp. 400-5 Roe to Conway, 28 May 1625

he steered a middle path. He promised to help the Transylvanians against Spanish demands but restrained the Transylvanian legate's more provocative statements against Spain and the Habsburgs. Nevertheless, the situation was looking increasingly desperate as the Spanish continued to entice the Porte towards peace with offers of providing European merchandise at lower prices than other western nations.

Just as the situation was looking hopeless, the Porte made a *volte-face* in Gabor's favour. It is not clear how this came about, because Roe sends only sparse details to the English authorities. The change was evidently sudden because Roe sent Secretary Conway a translation of Murad IV's permission for Gabor's alliance with the Protestant princes which was dated only five days after he had written about the allure of Spanish promises at the Porte.¹ The command named the English king as leader of the Protestant princes, and Roe was at pains to assure Conway that this was a mistake by Gabor who had drafted the petition.

Roe claimed to be out of touch with business that summer because he had taken up residence on one of the islands in the Sea of Marmara to escape the plague in the city. This does not tally with his selection as the leader in the resident ambassadors' mutual campaign against the Habsburgs in March 1626 or the speed of his actions when he returned to the city in November.² He worked rapidly with the other ambassadors to engineer the removal of the Spanish agent despite the support which the latter had built up among Porte officials during the summer. Despite his protestations that he had merely advised Porte officials, his role is clear from his report to Conway which concluded:

'sodainely the messenger is gone, not taking leave, having, as I am well informed, gotten no letter, no writing, no answere at all to his proposition; full of particular indignation against mee, and threatening that I shalbee sharply accused to his majestie.'³

The rapid termination of the Spanish negotiations appears to be the continuation of a policy designed to promote Gabor and not the work of a man who had been completely out of

1 See Negs. p. 430 Roe to Conway, 12/22 Aug; 434-5 Ibid to Ibid, 26 Aug. 1625

2 On Roe's leadership of the resident community, see Negs. pp. 490-1 Roe to Conway, 11/21 Mar. 1625/6

3 Negs. pp. 452-55 Roe to Conway, 4/14 Nov. 1625

contact with the Porte for a whole summer.

It is clear from the brevity of Roe's reports that he was playing a more active role in securing Gabor than he was admitting. Roe was still uncertain whether his policy regarding Gabor was wholeheartedly supported in England and he masked the extent of his involvement in promoting Gabor's case at the Porte for fear of rebuke. His reluctance to proclaim it to the English authorities without their assurance that he was pursuing the correct course of action is understandable. It squares with his later admission to Conway, after receiving such assurances, that

'I durst never fully discover myselfe in that coldness I found from England, which did freeze all but my affections to his majesty's service.'¹

Despite the achievement of a favourable response from the Porte towards Gabor, Roe still had work to do blocking the Habsburg agent's attempts to persuade the Porte towards a Spanish peace. More importantly, while he could secure a favourable climate for Gabor at the Porte, only a positive gesture from the anti-Habsburg states themselves could win Gabor to their cause. Between mid-1625 and mid-1626, Roe's instructions from England were intercepted and confiscated.² He had no way of knowing that his policy was in line with the general thrust of English foreign policy and could not see the progress of his policy in the light of developments in the wider European context.

Whoever intercepted Roe's instructions clearly aimed to prevent him from succeeding in his policy as they contained documents connected with the Hague treaty. These were intended to keep Roe abreast of developments in the European arena. Conway had also included a list of English policies designed to convince the Transylvanians of English commitment to the restoration of the Palatinate.³

Roe was given a breathing space by the negotiation of a Brandenburg marriage alliance for Gabor at Alba Julia. Conway once again attempted to keep him informed of English policy

1 Negs. pp. 526-30 Roe to Conway, 16 Jul. 1626

2 For the details of these letters and Roe's suspicions of their interception, see above p. 113 ff.

3 These documents in Negs. pp. 463-8 are taken from the Conway papers. Their inclusion immediately after Conway's instructions suggests that they were contained in the same dispatch.

by sending him a list of excuses for England's failure to make an independent treaty with Gabor. However, the real reason was that the English crown had exhausted its resources by its sponsorship of Mansfeldt but Roe was to continue to plead that the reason was that:

'his majestie held not that Port a place proper for such a Treaty, for those reasons by you so well presst, and did expect that Bethlem Gabor should have sent immediately hither, as he did to the French king.'¹

The English authorities were keen for Roe to continue to court Gabor so that he could be used as a diversion if required. Roe's role was to keep Gabor interested in the league of princes established under the Hague treaty and to prevent the Ottomans from invading any Christian territory.

The English excuse that the Porte was not a suitable place to negotiate a treaty, and the problems over communications which Roe experienced, reflect the difficulties of third party negotiations at the Porte. The English authorities still felt a reluctance, generated by the religious divide, to tie the Porte directly into European diplomatic struggles. Furthermore, although they recognised the role of their ambassador at the Porte as a channel for conducting central European relations, the obstacles to efficient communications prevented a fully coordinated foreign policy. While ambassadors could successfully conduct diplomatic business within the Porte because of their freedom to determine their own course of action, they were not well equipped to take part in a multi-national diplomacy whose focus lay beyond the Porte.

Roe's lack of information on English policy continued to give him cause for concern. He was completely surprised by the arrival of a Transylvanian legate at the Porte in June 1626. The Transylvanian brought information about the Hague treaty, and instructions to procure permission to join the treaty and to receive an endorsement of Gabor's role. It was only when Roe finally received instructions in July, approving the course he had taken, that he could play a leading role in soliciting the Porte for Gabor's permission to join the Hague league.

Negotiations between Gabor and the Porte had reached a stage where Roe was well equipped to promote Gabor's cause. Gabor's petition had to reach the sultan through the

¹ *Negs.* pp. 492-3 Conway to Roe, 18 Mar. 1625/6

normal administrative channels and Roe undertook to see that it did so, after consultation with other Western residents.¹ His plans did not go entirely smoothly since his chief contact at the Porte, the *Kaymakam*, had recently been replaced by an inexperienced officer, who took the unprecedented step of reading Gabor's petition in open divan. This gave the Habsburgs clear intelligence on Gabor's plans but Roe managed to turn this blunder to his advantage. He took the matter to the *Kazasker*, protesting that the *Kaymakam's* action was an innovation. This discreet pressure on the Porte won Gabor permission from the sultan. This did not sanction active war against the Habsburgs, but allowed Gabor to unite with the 'antient friends of the Port' and promised to delay any Habsburg minister sent to negotiate peace.²

Roe now had an administrative struggle on his hands as he sought to ensure that the Porte kept its word and to secure a more detailed letter of permission. He spent much of his time checking drafts of the agreement.³ He also had to temper Gabor's more excessive demands emanating from Gabor's hidden agenda of gaining strength to act independently of the Porte.

The autumn of 1626 saw Gabor mobilising his troops on the Hungarian border. His active involvement suggested that Roe's diplomatic struggle had been won. Roe even had hopes that his own job of securing Gabor for the anti-Habsburg states was finished:

'now there is no further use for my service, wher ther is more use of action and prosecution than negotiation.'⁴

His jubilation was shortlived because Gabor found that anti-Habsburg support was neither financially or materially sufficient to risk his position. That winter, he was already making a truce with the Habsburgs to allow him to regroup.

Roe was powerless to act, as arguments over finance between the anti-Habsburg allies

1 By September 1626, Roe suspected the French of involvement with the pro-Habsburg Jesuits at the Porte (see below, p. 266) and only discussed matters with the Venetians and Dutch, see *Negs.* pp. 558-62 Roe to Conway, 22 Sept. 1626.

2 *Negs.* pp. 536-8 Roe to Conway, 31 Jul. 1626

3 See above, p. 109.

4 *Negs.* pp. 570-1 Roe to Duke of Buckingham, 5/15 Nov. 1626

and Gabor blighted any real chance of using him as a diversionary strategy. In addition, desire had been growing at the Porte for a renewal of the Habsburg peace (especially after the Ottomans' humiliating defeat by the Safavids at Baghdad in September 1626), which would release troops on the Hungarian border to reinforce the campaign against the Safavids. Roe did what he could at the Porte to discourage any such renewal and despite the obvious attractions of peace, had some success in delaying it. He was helped in this task by the aggressive presentation of terms by the Habsburg agent, which was not well received at the Porte.

Such were the limits to Roe's action since the focus of activity had moved beyond the Porte. Even when Gabor showed further signs of seeking Ottoman protection, Roe recognised that Ottoman preoccupation with its eastern campaign did not bode well for the re-acceptance of Gabor at the Porte.

This was the position on Peter Wych's arrival at the Porte. Roe was willing to hand over the reins immediately but the English authorities were keen for him to resolve Gabor's ambivalent attitude to the Habsburgs and the Porte before he left. They awarded him the status of extraordinary ambassador, unprecedented in English relations with the Porte, to enable him to continue with this task. Roe was neither happy with his elevated status nor optimistic about his chances of success. He complained to Carleton that:

'The direction and prosecution of this business is referred to me and much expected at my hands, and yet my successor is arrived, I formally discharged, out of pay, without any instructions or disposition of me, but only a clause in Sir Peter Wiches papers, which are to me a slight and bare warrant.'¹

Now that Roe was no longer resident ambassador to the Porte, he could not call on merchant funds or a Company salary to support his work. The Crown wanted their ambassadors at the Porte to have all the responsibility of agents of the state, while lacking the resources to fund them, which was a major limitation on their ability to act in the wider scheme of diplomatic policy.

Despite his uncertain status, Roe did what he could to salvage Gabor's position at the

1 PRO SP97/14 f. 113 Roe to Carleton, 19/29 Apr. 1628

Porte. This was difficult because a renewal of the Habsburg-Ottoman peace was close to conclusion. Gabor himself was the key to the situation and by arming himself against the Habsburgs, he proved that he had shifted back to an anti-Habsburg stance however temporarily. He submitted to the Porte's authority once again in May 1628 and Wych (1628-39) noted that he

'hath not acquainted the Ambassadors of the confederate Princes therewith, but rather estranged himself from them, altogether submitting himselfe to the Grand Signor to be soly disposed of by him.'¹

This was enough to set the Porte wavering over whether to ratify its treaty with the Habsburgs. Roe chose to bow out at this time, having completed his damage limitation exercise as far as was possible.

The ultimate failure of Roe's policy confirmed that multilateral diplomacy at the Porte could succeed only when the Porte itself was an interested party or a controlling element. Thus Roe could secure the release of Gabor from the grasp of the Habsburgs because it was in the Porte's interests. He could win respect from the resident ambassadors at the Porte for keeping Gabor and the Ottomans on an even anti-Habsburg keel. He could not, however, guarantee Gabor full independence from the Porte because this threatened the Porte's own control.

Nevertheless, Roe was successful in working out a compromise which allowed Gabor to join the anti-Habsburg states in an extension of the concept of mutual amity defined in the capitulations. This was as far as his diplomatic authority could stretch. Working from the Porte, Roe could do nothing to ensure that Gabor received real support from his new allies. The inability of the allies to coordinate their resources, combined with Gabor's strong sense of self-preservation, was the real reason why Gabor never became the reliable ally that Roe had hoped to create.

The English continued to lend support to the Transylvanians until the Porte finally lost patience with its vassal's attempts to achieve independence status in 1658. However, after Roe's high-level involvement had failed, ambassadors at the Porte were more tacit in their support. Wych was only prepared to promote Gabor's new attempt to curry favour with the

¹ PRO SP97/14 f. 133 Wych to Conway, 3 May 1628

Porte, a project for an invasion of Poland, 'underhand' and not publicly.¹ Once Gabor died in November 1629, Wych continued to correspond with the various successors to the Transylvanian throne but made no attempt to actively involve the Transylvanians in the struggle against the Habsburgs. Indeed, it was not until Thomas Bendish's residence (1647-60) that the Transylvanians once again featured in English diplomacy at the Porte.

The Swedish-Transylvanian Alliance 1656-8

The Transylvanians sought help on religious grounds from the English from 1654, when their territory was under pressure from the Duke of Savoy and the Poles. The commonwealth authorities were happy to open a diplomatic correspondence but would not involve themselves further.² Bendish first became involved in 1656, at the request of the Swedes who had allied themselves with the Transylvanians against the Poles.³ This alliance was not favoured at the Porte and the Swedes wanted Bendish to change the political climate so that a Swedish delegation could come to the Porte. The Swedes wanted to put pressure on the Porte to prevent Tatar assistance to the Poles.

In a pattern already familiar, Bendish briefed Secretary Thurloe on the details of the Swedish case but received no response to his request for instructions. Bendish was still complaining to Thurloe in February 1657 that he had received no guidance on the Swedish issue. He warned that:

'uncommissioned, I am no more than a spectator whereas otherwise (by sounding the depths of some which I have opportunities to doe) I might play my parte with that advantages to his highnes the busiest upon this stage doe their princes.'⁴

Bendish was keen to play a role in wider diplomatic issues at the Porte but the Commonwealth

1 PRO SP97/14 f. 268 Wych to Conway, 2 May 1629

2 For English correspondence between Transylvania and England, see Leo Miller: 'The Milton/Cromwell Letter to Transylvania' Notes and Queries N.S 36.4 (1989) pp. 435-42.

3 On the Transylvanian motives behind this alliance, see Peter F. Sugar (Ed.): A History of Hungary (Indiana University Press, 1990) pp. 121-37

4 Thurloe, VI p. 65 Bendish to Thurloe, 18 Feb. 1656/7

authorities responded at their own pace. Even in April, when Bendish expressed relief that the authorities were finally attending to the matter, he had not received instructions but only an assurance that they would be forthcoming.

In fact, his instructions did not arrive until after the Swedish delegation had arrived at the Porte. This placed him in a difficult position, similar to the crisis which Roe had experienced between 1625-6. The Swedes expected him to have full powers to mediate a continuation of peace with the Porte, to obtain the diversion of the Tatars to the Muscovites, and permission for the Swedish-Transylvanian alliance against the Habsburgs. Instead, while Bendish was openly supportive and sympathetic, he was powerless to promote their case until he received his instructions which did not arrive until early July.

Bendish had built up good contacts at the Porte, as Roe had done before him. This enabled him to bring the Swedish case quickly to the attention of Boynu-eğri Mehmet Paşa, the Grand Vizier. Bendish used the combination of humility and pragmatism which worked well in routine negotiations. He realised that presenting the case as a favour the Porte could do for the English would not be sufficient to gain Ottoman acceptance of the proposals. He had more hope with his suggestion that the Porte could fight the Habsburgs through the Swedish-Transylvanian alliance at no cost to itself.

Even this latter argument was not enough to persuade the Porte to support the alliance. The Ottomans considered Transylvania's involvement a breach of their vassal status. They feared that the buffer zone of princedoms was in danger of disintegrating, leaving the northern border open to Habsburg advances. The Ottoman authorities viewed any encouragement of Transylvania's independence as too great a cost to themselves.

Bendish recognised that the Porte would continue to be intransigent on an issue which lay so close to Ottoman border security concerns. He realised that it was futile to embroil the English in a matter which was not in their direct interests. Instead, he chose a policy of damage limitation for the Swedes and Transylvanians. He could not reassure the Porte over the allegiance of the Transylvanians but managed to establish the direction which Ottoman policy would take. The picture was not an encouraging one and Bendish warned the delegation

that the Porte intended to impose their sovereignty by force.

The escalation of the Transylvanian crisis demonstrated more emphatically that Bendish could not hope to succeed. The aggressive stance of the Transylvanian representative alienated an already prejudiced Porte and resulted in his imprisonment in October 1657.¹ The deposition of the Transylvanian Prince, Georg Rakoczi II, and the appointment of an Ottoman puppet in December was further proof that the Porte was clamping down. When the Ottomans went to war over the issue and re-established the status quo of the buffer zone in July 1658, Bendish accepted that he was truly powerless to influence policy concerning the vital Ottoman buffer territory.

Bendish continued to act for the Swedes once they had been detached from the Transylvanian problem. He faced a similar deadlock because, even without the Transylvanians, the Swedish project threatened the stability of the Ottoman borders with Muscovy and Poland. Bendish could not afford to threaten the English position by negotiating on an issue which antagonised the Ottomans and over which he had very little influence. It is a mark of his determination and standing at the Porte that he managed to retain the respect he had won from the Ottomans and achieve an honourable departure for the Swedes.

Once again the failure of English diplomacy at the Porte demonstrated that the Ottoman state still retained control over its foreign political agenda. The Porte would only react favourably to pressure when it was in its interests to do so. The Ottoman view of national security was the maintenance of border stability, by force where necessary. The Porte also clung to its vassal states to provide a valuable buffer along these borders. No diplomat could expect to dissuade them from that policy for long without risking his own community's position. The ability of English ambassadors, most notably Roe and Bendish, to push the Porte and survive illustrates the strength of the English position and the personal ability of the ambassadors.

¹ PRO SP97/17 f. 140 Bendish to [Thurloe], 5 Oct. 1657

CHAPTER X. THE PROTECTION OF CHRISTIAN INTERESTS

The English failed in their attempts to use the Porte as a base for a far-reaching anti-Habsburg policy because their plans threatened to diminish the control which the Porte held over its border territories. However, although all English efforts at wider diplomacy were limited by the policy considerations of the Porte and the interplay of events on Ottoman borders, ambassadors could achieve less ambitious policy goals. In some policies, when English interests coincided with those of the Porte, the English could play a constructive role in advising Ottoman officials or mediating between the Porte and a third party.

The English had some success in broad-based negotiations at the Porte conducted under the blanket of protecting Christian and, more particularly, Protestant interests. This label is only a partial explanation of the motives behind Edward Barton's attempts to mediate for the Habsburgs in 1588 and again in 1593-4 and Roe's mediation of the Polish treaty in 1622-3, but the English were keen to promote themselves in this role to justify their presence at the Porte.

The English desire to appear to be acting for Christian interests at the Porte stemmed from continuing uneasiness about their relations with a Muslim state. They were anxious that their connections with the Ottoman Empire should not diminish their prestige in the eyes of their western counterparts.¹ This role gave weight to English arguments that they used their political ties with the Porte only in cases of extreme danger to the national and Protestant cause.

A determination to be viewed as a willing member of a Christian 'corps' was clearly one of Elizabeth I's motives when she allowed her ambassador at the Porte, Edward Barton, to act on behalf of the Habsburgs between 1588-93.² The ideological gloss placed on Barton's role also covered the main aim of Elizabeth's diplomatic efforts: that of using the Habsburgs

1 For Francis I's similar feelings of guilt, see Carl J. Burckhardt: Richelieu and His Age (trans.) Bernard Hoy 2 Vol. (London, 1970), II p. 291.

2 On the continuing concept of a 'corps' of Christendom, see Franklin L. Baumer: England, the Turk and the Common Corps of Christendom' AHR 1 (1944-5) pp. 26-48; J.V. Polisensky: 'Bohemia, the Turk and the Christian Commonwealth (1462-1620)' Byzantinoslavica XIV (1953) pp. 82-108

to persuade their Spanish cousins not to go to war with England.

Barton did not succeed in deterring the Porte from attacks on its Christian neighbours and this was to become the pattern of English efforts in this sphere. He failed to dissuade Murad III, and his Grand Vizier, Sinan Paşa from a Hungarian campaign because Ottoman border security was at stake. Nevertheless, Barton's real aim was to establish the English as responsible Christians and to create a climate of respect for the English at the Porte. In this goal, he did not go completely unrewarded since the Habsburgs accepted that England had not been encouraging the Ottomans and ordered the suppression of libels against the English.¹ His successors continued his work, regularly failing or achieving only temporary success, but gaining respect from other Christian nations for their willingness to try.

Roe's Mediation of an Ottoman-Polish peace 1622-3

The English continued to project themselves as the defenders of Christian interest even more forcibly during James I's reign. He genuinely disliked the Anglo-Ottoman alliance and considered dissolving it.² James embellished this English role, trying to present himself as mediator between all European states. It was in this spirit that he sent Roe (1622-28) to the Porte to negotiate a treaty for the Poles. Roe had been directed to introduce James I's policy to the Polish representative at the Porte in these terms. He noted:

'I let him know his Majestie had given mee command to signify to the Grand Signior his dislike of the invasion begunne; and that he would not leave the common cause of Christendome for any privat respects.'³

In fact, James I's attitude to the Poles was part of his wider attempt to persuade the Habsburgs and their allies to negotiate a universal European peace. The cover of protecting Christian interests by mediating for Poland strengthened James I's authority to coordinate a diplomatic settlement.

1 See R.B. Wernham: 'Queen Elizabeth I, the Emperor Rudolf II and Archduke Ernest 1593-4' in Kourie: Politics and Society pp. 437-51, pp.439-40

2 See above, p. 12.

3 Negs. pp. 17-18 Roe to Calvert, 9/19 Feb. 1621/2

Roe was cautious in his handling of the Polish case at the Porte because his main aim was to gain the respect of the Porte and raise English prestige in Europe. When he arrived, the Ottomans had already made a border peace with the Poles in a winter truce. This proved short-lived, and Habsburg intervention in the Polish struggle drove the Porte to react. The border peace was in jeopardy and Roe had no desire to put James I's name to a failing treaty.

In the traditional pattern of English diplomacy at the Porte, Roe spent some time reassuring both sides of his motives and assessing the prospects for peace. He played down his powers of mediation with the Poles until he decided they were serious about peace. He emphasised to the Porte that the English were acting out of Christian duty and not from a desire to dishonour the sultan. These arguments clearly won the Porte's confidence since he had a frank discussion with the Grand Vizier about the prospects of peace. He persuaded the Grand Vizier to allow him to write to the Poles, requesting another representative to negotiate peace. Roe also laid the ground for his role as a mediator by securing promises from the Grand Vizier that several Polish prisoners of war would receive fair treatment.¹

Roe still had to play a waiting game before negotiations began, as Osman toyed with the idea of a pilgrimage to Mecca.² Each side put pressure on the other to force a settlement favourable to themselves. The Ottomans murdered one of the Polish prisoners of war, Corresky, while the Poles provoked the Cossacks into raids on the Ottoman coast.³ Eventually, both sides tired of the stalemate and recognised that their respective political agendas demanded peace. The Porte was keen to deal with the Safavids, while Poland had dynastic designs on Sweden.

Even when the Polish delegation, which had been delayed by domestic troubles, arrived, Roe did not fully commit the English to a mediating role. He had shown his support

1 Roe could not secure the prisoners' release because the Porte they were a useful bargaining power. See *Negs.* pp. 24-27 Advice and Account sent to his Majestie, 9/19 Mar. 1621/2; 55-9 Roe to Calvert, 17/27 Jun. 1622.

2 This plan was probably a cover for Osman's radical ideas about replacing the troublesome janissaries with a new force to be gathered in Anatolia.

3 *Negs.* pp. 55-9 Roe to Calvert, 17/27 Jun. 1622; PRO SP97/8 f. 194 Roe to Nethersole, 1 Jun. 1622: The Porte denied that Corresky was murdered, claiming that he died of plague.

by registering a formal complaint about Corresky's death but did not take further steps.¹ Roe was ill with dysentery for the first few weeks after the Poles arrived but this was not the only reason for his inactivity. The Poles, led by their ambassador Zabarsky, had approached him with requests from Sigismund III for him to act for them but Roe was concerned by their refusal to provide the customary gifts for the sultan as this made an audience unlikely.² In addition, the Poles faced concerted opposition from the Transylvanians and Muscovites, who feared that peace would free the Poles for a further invasion of their territories and made accusations that the Poles had a treaty with the Spanish, who were seeking to infiltrate the Porte through them.³

It was not until January 1623 that Roe considered the time ripe for negotiation. Roe's task was to persuade the Porte to modify clauses and to put a good face on the completed articles for the Poles. He held preliminary meetings with the Paşa of Canisia (Kanizsa) who was responsible for the Ottoman negotiations to prepare for the main discussions. This dialogue with the Porte ironed out several minor difficulties and Roe was pleased that:

'betweene ourselves we reconciled many things and he promised to make relation thereof to the Vizier and gave his word, that he would labour to bring it to good issue.'⁴

Most importantly, Roe secured the right to have the deciding voice in any disagreement. Nevertheless, the negotiations took a month of concerted bargaining to achieve a settlement.

There were three main areas of conflict between the two sides which Roe had to resolve. The first was the contentious issue of Ottoman control of the Tatars and Polish control of the Cossacks. Roe had recognised even before the peace-talks that this was the major sticking point in the establishment of peace, arguing 'they know not how to doe it for those

1 PRO SP97/8 f. 220 Roe to Calvert, 10 Aug. 1622

2 PRO SP97/8 f. 318 Sigismund III to Roe, 22 Aug./2 Sept. 1622

3 For obstacles to peace, see PRO SP97/8 f. 239 Roe to Secretary Nethersole, 6 Sept. 1622; f. 248 Roe to [Nethersole], 19 Sept. 1622; f. 256 Roe to George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, 20 Sept. 1622; f. 291a Roe to George Villiers, duke of Buckingham, 13 Dec. 1622.

4 PRO SP97/9 f. 58 Roe to Calvert, 25 Jan. 1622/3

robbers, who now feare nobody.’¹ The Ottomans and Poles were not willing to make peace without guarantees about the control of these groups, but neither side could really control them or even affirm their allegiance. Roe included a clause where both sides promised to stop their respective ancillary forces but he knew this was no guarantee that incursions would cease.

Problems were also caused by different interpretations of Ottoman diplomatic forms and customs. The Poles were uncomfortable with the phrase ‘dostumuza dost düşmanimiza düşman’ which was standard in Ottoman treaties.² The Ottoman interpretation was that signatories would provide mutual support and actual aid to any war fought by either party. This was anathema to the Poles and Roe managed to modify the interpretation to read that neither party should assist the other’s enemy. Likewise, the Poles considered that the gifts expected by the Porte smacked of tribute while the Porte viewed it as an essential point of etiquette. Once again, Roe skirted the issue, emphasising instead the oath of both rulers as their bond. This prevented negotiations breaking down in pointless wrangling over interpretation.

The Porte also disputed the Poles claim that it was their right to elect the Prince of Wallachia and that the sultan’s role was purely to confirm their appointment. This was clearly another threat to Ottoman control of its vassal states and, as in the case of Transylvania, the Porte refused to relinquish power. Roe recognised the futility of disputing this clause and avoided the issue altogether by ensuring that the treaty was a general one, avoiding such details.

Roe recognised that the end result was not a particularly secure treaty. He complained to George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, that ‘there is no article of consequence but the generality of frend to frend and enemy to enemy.’³ This was demonstrated by Ottoman

1 Negs. pp. 61–3 Roe to Calvert, 1 Jul. 1622

2 This translates as ‘friend to our friends and enemy to our enemies’. The English were familiar with this term which was used in imperial correspondence between England and the Porte. See, for example B.A. MD/71 f. 68–9 Hukum 141, 4 Safer 1002 (October 1593).

3 Negs. pp. 133–35 Roe to Archbishop of Canterbury, 8/18 Mar. 1622/3

insistence that the Polish ambassador should be retained as a hostage until the peace was ratified. The situation was saved by a palace coup which removed Hadım Mehmet Paşa, the anti-Polish grand vizier behind the ploy. His successor, Mere Hüseyin Paşa, had been Grand Vizier the previous summer (13 June–3 July) and Roe was familiar with the way he worked. Roe was able to revive the negotiations and successfully accomplished the departure of the Polish ambassador.¹

Sigismund III, Zabarasky and several of the Polish prisoners of war who were freed through Roe's mediation sent letters of thanks to James I and to Roe himself. These confirmed that Roe's aim of raising the profile of the English as protector of Christian interests was achieved. The treaty itself proved less durable. The ambassador's baggage train which had gone ahead was attacked by Tatars in direct contravention of the treaty. Furthermore, the Polish ambassador was in such haste to leave while the Porte was favourable to the treaty that he did not check it until he reached Wallachia. There he found 'almost every article altered and much new matter inserted... all for the advantage of the Turks and the dishonour of the Poles.'²

Although an uneasy peace continued through 1623, Tatar and Cossack raids continued unabated. Roe's fears that these uncontrollable elements were at the root of Polish-Ottoman conflict were proving well-founded. Roe still took an interest in the Polish situation but never again acted as their sole mediator. His original aims had been achieved and further involvement in the Polish case could jeopardise the respect he had won at the Porte. There was no encouragement for further mediation from England, as James had been forced to abandon his plan for a diplomatic settlement. One of the great strengths of English ambassadors at the

1 Roe's correspondence on the last delicate stages of negotiations can be found in *Negs.* pp. 12–22 Roe to Calvert, 25 Jan 1623; PRO SP97/9 f. 17 Roe to [Carleton], 25 Jan, 1622/3; f. 29 Roe to Carew, 10 Feb. 1622/3; f. 33 Articles between Poland and Turkey, 20 Feb, 1622/3; f.58 Roe to Calvert, 25 Jan.[/Feb.] 1623; f. 281 Sigismund III to Vizier Hussein, 1623; f. 287 Remonstrance of Zabarasky, 1623.

2 PRO SP97/9 f. 72 Roe to [Carleton], Apr. 1623; f.110 Zabarasky to Roe, 20 May 1622/3; *Negs.* pp. 151–53 Roe to James I, 20 May 1623: Roe's experience of the cunning of the Ottoman chancery in this matter helps to explain his concern to examine every stage of drafting in his later negotiations for Gabor, see above, p. 109.

Porte was that they recognised the value of bowing out of negotiations when English prestige was highest. Roe realised that he could continue to act for Christian interests in less risky projects than the re-establishment of a Polish peace.

The English and the Greek Patriarchate

One way in which the English could maintain their credentials as serving Christian interests was in their protection of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire. This was not a single set of negotiations but long-term protection and support for the Orthodox community at several different levels, coordinated by the English ambassadors at the Porte.

The foreign resident communities had freedom of worship, conditional upon them not proselytising, by dint of their capitulatory status. The Greek citizens of the Ottoman Empire were also permitted their own form of worship by virtue of their *zimmi* status.¹ English ambassadors were careful to keep these terms, fearing that any contravention could jeopardize their community.² When English Quakers began to visit the Porte as missionaries in the 1650s, Bendish (1647–60) was quick to send them home.³ The Porte also abided by these regulations but resident ambassadors often acted on religious grounds to protect individuals who had fallen foul of the Ottoman authorities. The French had established themselves as the protector of Roman Catholics at the Porte and so it was natural that the English, as their main rivals, would make themselves responsible for Protestants and the Greek Orthodox Church.

The English relationship with the Greek Orthodox Church must be understood in the light of contemporary thinking. It was based partly on a mutual mistrust of Roman Catholics and Habsburg regulation of religion in the Balkans. The English also saw the Orthodox church

1 On the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the Orthodox Church, see G. Georgiades Arnakis: 'The Greek Church of Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire' *JMH* (1952) pp. 235–250

2 The Porte could be strict about this privilege, as was demonstrated in 1634, when the French ambassador was forced to demolish his new chapel. See above, p. 143.

3 See above, p. 138 ff.

as a historical justification for their own anti-Roman Catholic stance.¹ They considered that the Orthodox church had broken away from the Catholic church before corruption had seeped into it. It was hoped that the writings of the early church preserved in Orthodox church libraries would support Protestant arguments that the purity of the church had later been distorted. Both Roe and Wych (1628-39), who worked most closely with the Orthodox Church, wanted to send Orthodox scholars and writings to England to help promote this view.

They were helped in their task by the powerful Orthodox figure of Cyril Lukaris, who was Patriarch of Constantinople from 1620 until his deposition and death in 1638. In 1615, as Patriarch of Alexandria, he opened a dialogue with the Archbishop of Canterbury through the ambassador at the Porte, Paul Pindar (1612-20). Lukaris was at the Porte, en route to the Balkans from where he had heard of increasing Jesuit influence among the Orthodox communities. He had already established links with the Dutch resident Cornelius de Haga, but was clearly looking for more support against Jesuit activity.² The English community at the Porte were obvious candidates.

The first stage of the English relationship with the Orthodox church was an educational programme. Young men were selected to attend Balliol College, Oxford, with the aim of learning the precepts and teaching methods of western theologians.³ This paralleled Lukaris's own efforts to reform the Patriarchal Academy in Constantinople. Both projects were designed to counteract the teachings of the Jesuits in their communities.⁴

In the 1620s when Roe was resident at the Porte, the situation became more serious.

1 For English attitudes to the orthodox church and attempts to establish a universal Anglican church encompassing the Orthodox church, see Hugh Trevor Roper: 'The Church of England and the Greek Church in the Time of Charles I' Studies in Church History 15 (1978) pp. 213-40.

2 See de Groot: Dutch Republic (Leiden, 1978) *passim*.

3 For details of individual scholars, see F.H. Marshall: 'An Eastern Patriarch's Education in England' JHS XLVI (1926) pp. 185-202; W.B. Patterson: 'Educating the Greeks: Anglican Scholarships for Greek Orthodox Students in the Early Seventeenth Century' Studies in Church History 17 (1981) pp. 227-37.

4 On the reform of the Patriarchal Academy, see Steven Runciman: The Great Church in Captivity (Cambridge, 1968) p. 271.

The Jesuits who had entered the Porte with French protection soon began to carry out the instructions of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide established in 1622. In March 1623 the Jesuits attempted to oust the Patriarch and replace him with their own candidate, the Archbishop of Amasya, Gregory. This was the only way in which they could hope to influence the Greek community at the Porte because of the rules on proselytising.

The Patriarch approached the English ambassador for help but, although Roe supported him, he was not prepared to involve the English in the problem. Roe advised the Patriarch to handle the situation from within the church, to preach against the plot without citing the Jesuits and to excommunicate the Jesuit puppet.¹ It is probable that Roe did not want the Orthodox problem to interfere with his Polish negotiations. Haga and Lukaris did not agree with his efforts to secure a Polish peace. They preferred to incite the Orthodox Muscovite tsar against the Roman Catholic Polish king. Indeed, it was this correspondence with Muscovy which persuaded the Grand Vizier to agree to Lukaris's deposition. Roe could not afford to be connected with a policy opposing the peace negotiations he was brokering.

It is also possible that Roe hoped to avoid any obvious display of Christian disunity in this course of action. He was certainly dismayed that the French support of the Jesuits and the Dutch protection of Lukaris caused a rift between them.² However, he underestimated the determination of the Jesuits. They bribed the Grand Vizier, Mere Hüseyin Paşa, to have the Patriarch imprisoned and the Jesuit nominee promoted.³

Roe was still unwilling to involve the English in the matter although he wrote to George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, briefing him on the situation and asking him to inform the king. It was left to the Dutch to take advantage of the appointment of Kemankes Kara Ali Paşa as Grand Vizier in August to bribe the new incumbent and restore Lukaris to his seat.⁴

1 Negs. pp. 133-35 Roe to George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, 8/18 Mar. 1622/3

2 Negs. pp. 184-5 Roe to Carleton, 4/14 Oct. 1623

3 Negs pp. 146-7 Roe to Archbishop of Canterbury, 2/12 Mar. 1622/3

4 Negs. pp. 184-5 Roe to Carleton, 4/14 Oct. 1623

It was not until October 1625 when Roman Catholic attempts to oust the patriarch became connected with the Spanish delegation at the Porte, that Roe committed himself to high-level protection of the Orthodox community. The Vatican had sent Canachio Ross to the Orthodox community to reunite them with Rome. Ross, who travelled via Spanish Naples, had approached the Patriarch with arguments for union and the Patriarch had sought Roe's advice.¹ Roe may well have seen this latest Jesuit plot as a means to remove the Spanish agent from the Porte, a crucial stage in his anti-Habsburg negotiations.² He presented the problem to the Grand Vizier as one element in a Spanish plot to infiltrate the Porte.³ The warning that the Orthodox community within the Ottoman Empire was open to Spanish influence appears to have hit home. The resulting dismissal of the Spanish envoy solved both Roe's and the Patriarch's problems temporarily.

This episode was not sufficient to rid the Porte of Jesuit influence but no further opportunity for action arose until January 1628. The Jesuits, with French backing, attempted to stop the establishment of an Orthodox printing press, realising that it could counter their own education programmes. The French involved the Porte in the issue, sending a passage of one of Lukaris's own tracts to the Grand Vizier as evidence that the Patriarch was preaching sedition against the Muslims.⁴ Both the Dutch and English made formal complaints to the Porte on the issue and from the French ambassador's threat that he would leave the Porte unless the Jesuits were admitted, it appears that they sought the exclusion of the Jesuits on the grounds that they did not have a legitimate reason to stay at the Porte.⁵

The Anglo-Dutch deputation successfully engineered the banishment of the Jesuits from the Porte on 6 March 1628. While the English were glad to have been of service to the

1 Negs. pp. 469-71 Roe to Patriarch with Cardinal Bandini's instructions to Canacchio Ross, Nov. 1625

2 See above, p. 248 ff.

3 Negs. pp. 487-8 Roe to Archbishop of Canterbury, Feb. 1625/6

4 See Negs. pp. 757-63 Narration of Jesuits' Practices, 22 Feb. 1627/8

5 PRO SP97/14 f. 53 Roe to Dr. Goade, 16/26 Feb. 1627/8

Orthodox community, they were also satisfied by the humiliation of their French rivals.

The successful expulsion of the Jesuits was short-lived. While French prestige suffered a blow over its involvement with the Jesuits, it was difficult for the Porte to prevent the Jesuits from returning under French protection. Jesuit activity at the Porte clearly continued in the 1630s, when, although the Dutch continued to intervene, Wych could not afford such an active role. Neither Laud nor Charles I was interested in pursuing the political element of the Anglo-Orthodox relationship and Wych was preoccupied with securing the protection of the English community at the Porte.¹

Without the combined strength of the Dutch and English, the Jesuits finally succeeded in removing Lukaris for good in 1638. As on previous attempts to depose the Patriarch, the French and Jesuits claimed that he was involved in treasonable acts against the Ottoman state, in this case that he had a secret correspondence with the Porte's Cossack and Muscovite enemies. Once again, the English were restricted in their policy by this focus on national security issues.

The cautious involvement of the English in the protection of the Orthodox community at the Porte, in contrast with the generous efforts of the Dutch, belies the actual strength of their relationship. Both Roe and Wych had a good personal relationship with Lukaris: Wych even named one of his sons after him and made him godfather. English ambassadors played a far more active role at a lower level, without involving the Porte. They procured safe-conducts to travelling Greeks.² They conducted a regular correspondence with the patriarch and Roe organised an exchange of books between England and the Patriarchate.³

Nevertheless, there was always an ulterior motive in the English efforts. The cultural programmes were designed to give England prestige among Protestant states. More localized

¹ See above, p. 144 ff.

² *Negs.* pp. 319-20 Roe to Archbishop of Canterbury, 9/19 Dec. 1624. This practice of supplying such grants of protection to Ottoman subjects may well be the fore-runner to the more extensive protégé system which foreign ambassadors operated in the nineteenth century, see Salahi R. Sonyel: 'The Protégé System in the Ottoman Empire and its Abuse' *Belleten* LV (1991) pp. 675-86.

³ *Negs.* pp. 459-61 Roe to Archbishop of Canterbury, 11 Nov. 1625

efforts to restrict Jesuit activity also served English interests. The English were prepared to help to secure a candidate who was not a Jesuit for the Roman Catholic Archbishopric of Chios and Smyrna which undoubtedly eased pressure on the Orthodox community. Their real motivation was to ensure that the bishop did not work against English interests in this important trade centre.¹

Clearly, English ambassadors were actively involved in a broad range of projects designed to increase respect for the English as true members of the 'corps of Christendom'. The detail of their negotiations in this sphere, however, demonstrates their greater dedication to preserving the favourable position which they had won for themselves at the Porte. It was this caution and commitment which ensured that the English retained their pre-eminent position among western representatives at the Porte.

¹ The English used the Venetians who also resented Jesuit interference to secure a suitable candidate. *Negs.* pp. 512-13 Roe to Isaac Wake, agent in Senate, 8, 21 May 1625/6; pp. 525-6 Wilkinson to Roe, 13 Jun. 1626; pp. 546-7 Roe to Wake [wrongly entitled Wake to Roe], 6/16 Sept. 1626

CONCLUSION

In 1560, the English had very little direct contact with the Levant and none with the Ottoman Empire itself. Trade with the region was conducted through the channels of the Antwerp market and Venetian intermediaries. Yet, only a century later, the English possessed an embassy at the Porte, which uniquely among England's few resident embassies abroad was manned continually between 1583-1661. It was led by a fully accredited ambassador and supported by a sophisticated embassy administration and a network of consular posts throughout the Mediterranean. Other Western resident ambassadors grudgingly recognised that the English had pre-eminence at the Porte both in terms of their favourable trading conditions and their influence on policy decisions affecting the foreign communities within Ottoman territory. That the English had established such an embassy in the first place is remarkable in itself: that they had run it so effectively and successfully is even more exceptional.

It is undeniable that the development of the Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic relationship is inextricably linked with the establishment and development of the Levant Company and English commercial expansion into the Levant and beyond. Without Company funds to support the ambassador and the whole embassy structure in Constantinople, it is doubtful that an ambassador would ever have been sent to the Porte, even more that he would have stayed. The English Crown balked at the prospect of relations with a Muslim state but it was prepared to endorse an ambassador provided at no expense to itself by the Company. It was this exceptional character of the position of ambassador to the Porte as both commercial and state agent that made the diplomatic relationship operational and sustainable.

This is not to say that the diplomatic relationship was synonymous with the commercial relationship. Diplomatic relations between the Porte and Whitehall had their own dynamic, born of the recognition by both parties that they could be useful to each other. Relations with the Ottoman Empire were not among the priorities of successive English governments, which were more concerned with developments closer to home, but they were important as they could be used to swing the situation in Europe in England's favour both strategically and diplomatically. The Ottoman presence in the Mediterranean, albeit increasingly through their

volatile vassals the Barbary States, and on the borders of Habsburg central Europe made them a potential weapon to help contain the Habsburgs. In parallel with this, the developing English diplomatic presence at the Porte gave the English a chance to curry favour with other European powers by representing their interests at the Porte. On several occasions English ambassadors acted as intermediaries for countries involved with the Ottoman Empire who had not been as successful as they had in establishing relations with the Porte. In the case of Elizabeth's intervention in the Habsburg-Ottoman war (1593-1606), the English hoped to gain Habsburg goodwill which might encourage them to dissuade their Spanish cousins from continuing their hostility towards England. When Cromwell instructed Bendish to help the Swedes in the 1650s, he was hoping for commercial goodwill in the Baltic.

The Porte too recognised in the English Crown a willing partner and pivot to contain the Habsburg-Catholic advance. England's consistent Protestant credentials, even during the periods of Anglo-Hispanic cordiality from 1604-23 and in the English neutrality of the 1630s made the English a more secure ally than the French and Venetians whom the Porte suspected of collusion with the Catholic Habsburgs. The two Protestant nations at the Porte, the English and the Dutch, both had more success than their Catholic counterparts at the Porte during this period, but the English with their more sophisticated administrative network were the most successful of all. The geo-political situation of both the Ottoman Empire and England, on the periphery of Europe, differing in religious practice from the main Roman Catholic European powers, provided the basis of the Anglo-Ottoman relationship. The durability of the relationship was the result of hard campaigning by the embassy, with ambassadors seizing opportunities for the English to shine whenever they arose.

I have established that success at the Porte was dependent on several factors, which the English were particularly well-placed to meet. Firstly, the climate for trade was favourable: the Porte wanted munitions and the raw materials to produce them and the English, alone among their established French and Venetian competitors in the region, were unaffected by Papal prohibitions on supplying the Ottomans. The English benefitted, too, from the technological advances in the textile industry which allowed them to undercut the

Venetians and edge them out of the market. Most importantly, from the English point of view, the Ottoman Empire offered them direct access to the luxury goods and spices which were the real motivation of their trade.

Once favourable conditions for trade were established through the capitulations, the English had several advantages over their competitors. The interdependence of the diplomatic structure with the Company structure made it much easier for English ambassadors to regulate their communities. Clear channels of communication existed between Constantinople and all local trading centres so that policy decisions and changes in trading practice could be passed on swiftly for the protection of the communities. Likewise the consular structure allowed simple commercial disputes to be dealt with at a local level while more complicated cases and those involving the protection of individuals or a community had recourse to the ambassador in his capacity as diplomatic agent of the state.

This study has demonstrated that the close links between the embassy and the Company contributed to the embassy's rapid assimilation of Ottoman practice and its sophistication in dealing with the mechanics of diplomacy. The continuity in both English and local staff ensured the embassy's smooth operation and provided regional experience and expertise to support the diplomatic skills of successive able ambassadors. Incompetent ambassadors like Eyre and Crow were the exception in the Constantinople embassy but even in such crises, the embassy managed to function successfully at a routine level because of its experienced staff.

In addition to the strength provided by its relationship with the Company, the embassy benefitted from being given an unprecedented degree of freedom in its actions by the Crown. The practice of providing unspecific, general instructions and allowing ambassadors to the Porte to fill in the details of policy-making and implementation was the Crown's response to the challenge created by the distance between the Porte and Whitehall. In general terms, it worked well and this delegation of responsibility gave the English a further advantage over the Venetians and French who had to await detailed instructions on all aspects of policy from their respective governments. It is not surprising that the Dutch adopted a similar

communications system to that of the English on their arrival at the Porte in 1612. The Dutch were slower to rise to prominence at the Porte because they did not develop the sophisticated administration which provided every English ambassador with experienced personnel and the vital records of precedents and regulations.

Finally, the embassy succeeded because the combination of English attractiveness to the Ottomans, the independence of action permitted by the Crown and the financial support of the Company enabled the ambassador to adapt fully to the conventions of the Porte. Ambassadors could recognise when generosity or bribes were required and had the funds available locally to meet such requirements quickly to resolve cases.

As well as pointing to the success of the English at the Porte, I have shown areas where tensions existed between the English and the Ottoman authorities. I have demonstrated that the Porte had a long way to go before it shifted to the western system of diplomacy. In this period, both reciprocal and non-reciprocal forms of diplomacy stood uncomfortably side by side as both Ottoman and English officials sought to explain the practice of diplomacy in their own terms. Changes did occur as the English found themselves in a position to push for a broadening of the terms of the Capitulations, but the practical weakness of the Ottoman authorities on this issue did not herald a new era of reciprocity. Despite occasional semi-official Ottoman visits to Europe, the Porte retained its traditional non-reciprocal attitude to diplomacy.

In addition, the Porte had its own priorities of foreign policy which limited the favours the Ottomans showed the English, especially in the negotiation of high-level diplomacy. In issues involving the Ottoman vassal states of central Europe or areas bordering on Ottoman territory, the Porte was reluctant to respond to English calls for action. With resources already stretched to maintain its existing borders, the Porte would not be drawn into international alliances which could threaten the fragile stability of its border territories.

My study highlights one important change in Ottoman diplomacy. This was the expansion and growing sophistication of the Ottoman chancery which, through the person of the *Reisülküttab*, later became closely connected with foreign affairs. In the seventeenth

century, the experience of the English demonstrates that the role of the Grand Vizier and, to a much lesser extent, the *Reisülküttab* was already expanding to cope with the increase of foreign business.

The pattern of English diplomacy in the region also contributes to the growing evidence that a gulf existed between the formation and execution of policy at the administrative centre of the Ottoman Empire and its execution in the provinces. The differing experiences of the communities in Smyrna and Aleppo suggest that while the Porte's command extended as far as the Western seaboard, it held little authority over eastern areas. The local authorities in Aleppo responded only temporarily to the restraining edicts of the Porte, and merchants found themselves operating in a local power-bloc, controlled by local magnates, whose interests did not correspond to the Porte and who did not recognise any diplomatic privileges concerning the English community.

I have also shown another Ottoman weakness in the Porte's control of Mediterranean security. The activities of the Ottoman fleet were increasingly restricted to the Black Sea and the Aegean by Cossack raids. The Porte was also unable to control acts of piracy by its North African vassal states. It is clear from the detail of negotiations that the Porte made real attempts to cover up this inadequacy by making concessions on cases over which it did have control. Since the English authorities were equally ineffective in preventing acts of piracy by English ships, both the Porte and Whitehall dealt with cases they could resolve and ignored those they could not.

A corollary of diminished Ottoman control over the Mediterranean was the growing sense of responsibility which successive English governments felt towards protecting English ships. The presence of the English at the Porte enabled them to find a workable diplomatic solution to the problem through the extension of the Capitulations to cover the Barbary States. This could not prevent all acts of piracy as the English were just as likely to be attacked by the Dutch or the French as by the Barbary States. Increasingly, the Mediterranean was drawn into considerations of maritime defence as a whole, as a homogenous unit with the Atlantic. Indeed, the needs of the English community in the Levant drew the governments of both

Charles I and Cromwell to attempt to establish a properly funded and organised state navy. The pattern of policy-planning described in chapter seven suggests that the project which failed under Charles was taken up for similar motives by Cromwell and was fully realised in subsequent post-Restoration state navies.

The establishment of permanent English representation at the Porte and the development of the Anglo-Ottoman relationship are remarkable in their own right, coming less than twenty years after the death of Suleiman I (the Magnificent) who had revived fears of the Muslim 'Terror of the World' in the West. It was England's first sustained diplomatic contact with a non-Christian, non-European state and it became the model for English relations with other non-Christian powers as it expanded its commercial enterprises and diplomatic interests further east.

The shift from the English Crown's acquiescence to acceptance of direct diplomatic relations with the Porte was not achieved with the successful establishment of the embassy in Constantinople. Even in 1604, James I was still reluctant to acknowledge the need for diplomatic relations, claiming

'it was a matter of no moment to him that an ambassador should reside in Constantinople, as he had no wish to continue friendly relations with the Turk.'¹

Yet despite continuing qualms about the Anglo-Ottoman relationship, the embassy continued its diplomatic work, as successive governments recognised the important part it could play in strategic considerations. When James I's grandson, Charles II, took the throne in 1660, the situation became clearer. In addition to Winchilsea's commercial duties, he was to work for the protection of Christian princes and, even more importantly, he was to:

'be vigilant as to any practises and negotiations for leagues and confederacyes which may anywise reflect on us... and therein use your best endeavours to oppose exorbitances and to keep the ballance, that none may encroach or render himself formidable to his neighbour.'²

The dual role of the English embassy and the diplomatic success of the Anglo-Ottoman

1 CSPV 1603-07 pp. 184-85 no. 278 Nicolo Molin, Venetian Ambassador in England, 6 Oct. 1604

2 PRO SP97/17 f. 150 Instructions to Winchilsea, c. Aug. 1660

relationship had at last been fully acknowledged in England as well as at the Porte.

APPENDIX ONE

A handlist of ambassadors to Turkey can be found on pp. 283-287 of Gary M. Bell: A Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives, 1509-1688 (Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks 16, 1990) although it incorrectly includes Richard Lawrence as an ambassador. Wood notes in his Appendix I pp. 251-53 when ambassadors received their commissions and articles with the Company and the dates of their arrival and departure from the Ottoman Empire. The list below is intended to supplement these sources.

William Harborne (1583-88): Originally from Yarmouth where his father was influential figure in local administration. He went to Spain c. 1559 and was factor for Edward Osborne, one of the founders of the Levant Company, by 1578. Travelled to Porte in this capacity in 1578 and obtained individual trade licence for his sponsors, Osborne and Richard Staper. He returned to England with a letter from Murad III to Elizabeth and was back at the Porte with her response in 1580 to negotiate capitulations for the English. He returned to England in 1581 with the capitulations and was appointed as her ambassador in November 1582, arriving at the Porte in April 1583 with his official letters and gifts. He had the responsibility of organising the administration of trade in the region, establishing consulates in Alexandria, Syrian Tripoli, Aleppo, Chios, Patras and Algiers to cover all areas of the trade. He was responsible for dissuading the Porte from renewing a truce with Spain in 1587. Retired from his commission in summer of 1588 after serving for twice the length of his original contract. He settled in Norfolk, became a member of restructured Levant Company in 1592 and died in 1617.

SOURCE: E.S. de Beer: Dictionary of National Biography

Edward Barton (1588-97): Born in 1563, Barton was educated to grammar school level. He was in the Levant in 1582 and acting as an administrator by 1584 when Harborne sent him to Barbary States to establish direct contact with these Ottoman vassals. He became Harborne's secretary in 1584 and despite his youth, Harborne suggested him as his successor, albeit with

a reduced title of agent. He became agent/ambassador in August 1588 and prevented truce negotiations between Spain and the Porte in 1590 and autumn 1592. He involved himself in central European politics in attempt to curb Habsburg influence. He presented his official gift to sultan in the winter of 1593 and went on Mehmed III's Hungarian campaign in 1596 leaving John Sanderson behind as his deputy. He died of dysentery in office in December 1597. He was unpopular with the Venetian and especially the French ambassadors because he offered the protection of the English flag to other nations such as the Dutch. He was a good linguist who knew Latin, Italian, some Greek and Turkish.

SOURCES: E.S. de Beer: D.N.B., Sanderson: Travels p. 13

Henry Lello (1597-1606): He was secretary to Edward Barton in 1597 and succeeded him as ambassador. He was an anxious man, working to renew the capitulations at a difficult time for the English, who did not present their official gifts until 1599. His term of office was marked by prolonged quarrel over precedence with the French ambassador. Despite his problems, Lello was reluctant to leave his post and quarrelled with his successor Glover before leaving in May 1607; This quarrel may have been the root of Glover's accusations in a letter of August 1607 that Lello misappropriated funds intended to ransom Thomas Sherley. In return, Lello accused Glover of bigamy in Nov. 1607. Lello was knighted on his return to England in 1608.

SOURCES: Alderson: Sherley's Piratical Expedition p. 9; Sanderson: Travels pp. 166-7, 242; Wood p. 82

Thomas Glover (1606-12): He was the nephew of a London alderman, Sir William Glover, and son of a merchant trading at Danzig and his Polish wife. He grew up in Constantinople, becoming a member of Levant Company and acting as secretary to Barton. He returned to England but travelled back to Constantinople with Dallam in 1599 and acted as secretary and translator for Lello. He returned to England again, and was knighted in 1606 when appointed Lello's successor. He took his wife to Constantinople where she died of plague in 1608. He spoke Turkish well although he was less competent in Latin and involved himself in protecting English travellers in the region and freeing Christian slaves. He was recalled in 1612 because

of his promotion of a candidate to the Moldavian voyvodship in opposition to that championed by the Porte.

SOURCES: Bosworth: William Lithgow's Travels pp. 24-25; Sanderson: Travels pp. 188-9, 219-20, Wotton: Life and Letters II pp. 445-6

Paul Pindar (1612-20): He was first sent as a factor to Venice and in the 1580s and stayed in Italy for about fifteen years. He was a member of Lello's administration in 1599 because he delivered an English gift to the Sultan Valide and became popular with her. He was in Lello's administration at same time as Glover, but made accusations against Glover when he succeeded him as ambassador in 1612. He returned to England with Dallam to report on the problems of English at Porte. He then served as briefly as consul to Venice in 1602, before being appointed consul in Aleppo, where he served from 1606-11. His main concern as ambassador was to counteract accusations of English piracy in the Mediterranean and to maintain the privileges of the English in the face of Ottoman attempts to curb them. He was knighted in 1620 on his return to England. He built a house in Bishopsgate and became a major city financier. He drew up proposals for a national bank in 1620s and was given the lease of Alum works for 12 years in 1625. He also dominated the Customs Farm until 1641. He contributed to various Crown and civic causes, lending to the exchequer and in 1636 to the Admiralty Treasurer, and providing loans and selling diamonds for resale to the Stuarts. He also gave £10,000 to repair of old St. Pauls, and contributed to Courteen's E. India expedition in 1635. He supported the royalist cause during the English Civil War. He died in 1650 and was buried in St. Botolph's Church in London.

SOURCES: Mayes: Organ *passim*; Robert Ashton: The Crown and the Money Market 1603-40 (Oxford, 1960) pp. 96-98, 175; Dent: Early Voyages p. 66, 86; Roman Cizdyn: Monopolies in England, 1603-30 Oxford M.Litt Thesis p. 191

John Eyre (1620-22): He was knighted in 1604. Clearly a quick tempered man, he was notorious for a street brawl with Sir Edward Herbert, later ambassador to France, after alleging that the latter was having an affair with Eyre's wife, Lady Dorothy. He was disinherited by his father as a result and went to Ireland but renewed his attack on Herbert on his return. According to Judge Sir James Whitelocke, who was related to Eyre by marriage,

Eyre was 'the most dissolute, unjust and vitious reprobates that liveth upon the face of the earthe'. His appointment to the embassy was James I's choice and was probably achieved through the influence of his wife who attended the Queen. He was immediately unpopular with merchants who considered he had been forced upon them. They had wanted an agent in Constantinople after Pindar but were persuaded to pay the extra expense of an ambassador in return for Porte concessions. Eyre was ill during his term of office and did not enjoy his position. He especially feared that he would have to go on Hungarian campaign with the sultan. He presented the English view of Ottoman preparations for a Polish campaign to the Porte but met with little success in dissuading it from action. He seized consulage to cover arrears in allowance, thus completely alienating the merchants. He also had several merchants imprisoned after accusing them of owing him money. He was aware of his unpopularity and asked to be recalled in April 1621. He was recalled 2 years before his contract expired, accused by the Company of extorting £300 more than his allowance from the English at Constantinople and of disrupting Levant trade. A commission of investigation into the dispute eventually allowed him to keep the money because the Company had first broken his contract by falling into arrears with his allowance. He was not allowed to make further claims on the consulage.

SOURCES: BL Add. MSS 38597 f. 7; Ibid 36444 f. 189; SP97/7 f. 191; 204, 216 97/8 f.1, 29, 53-4; Sir Edward Herbert: Autobiography (ed.) S. Lee (London, 1886); Ruth Spalding: Contemporaries of Bulstrode Whitelocke 1605-75 (Oxford, 1990) p. 88; Wotton: Life and Letters II p. 221; CSPD 1619-23

Thomas Roe (1622-28): Born c. 1581 in Low Leyton, Essex, into a merchant family. He went to Magdalen College, Oxford at age twelve. He attended court and was appointed Esquire of the Body to Elizabeth I in the late 1590s. He was knighted by James I in March 1605. Roe was an associate of Prince Henry who sent him on voyage of discovery to the West Indies from 1610-11, where he travelled up the Amazon. On his return, he was elected MP for Tamworth in 1614 and in same year was appointed as ambassador to the Mogul court in India to negotiate a favourable trade settlement for the English. He returned to England in 1618, settling the silk trade in Persia on way back. He was elected as burgess for Cirencester in January 1621 but was appointed ambassador to the Porte in July 1621, arriving the following February. His main

concern was to establish a workable level of security in the Mediterranean and to contain Habsburg dominance in Central Europe through the Porte's vassal of Transylvania. He had good contacts in England: his wife was Eleanor, daughter of Sir Thomas Cave of Stanford and niece of Lord Grandison, he held an extensive correspondence with Dudley Carleton and collected antiquities for Earl of Arundel and duke of Buckingham. On his way back from Turkey, he was sent to mediate between Poland and Sweden and to conclude an Anglo-Danish treaty. He arrived in England in the summer of 1630 but received no court appointment until 1637 when he became chancellor of the order of the Garter. He returned to diplomatic duties, attending the Hamburg conference (1638-40) and Ratisbon diet (1641-2), although in between these he pursued his duties as an MP. He became a member of the Privy Council in 1640 and died in November 1644.

SOURCES: D.N.B. pp. 89-93; Strachan: Sir Thomas Roe (London, 1989)

Peter Wych (1628-38): He was the son of a London merchant, who gained experience through trading in Spain for many years. He was one of Buckingham's protégés, knighted in December 1626 and made a member of the Privy Chamber in 1628. He had experience of administrative role as an assistant in the English embassy in Madrid. He was the Crown's second choice nomination for the ambassadorship after their first candidate died. His trading experience made him more acceptable to the Company. During his residence, he was preoccupied with protecting merchants in the Mediterranean and in Constantinople but continued to play a role in offsetting Habsburg influence in central Europe. His wife Jane went with him to Constantinople and bore several children during their time there. He continued good relations with the Greek Orthodox Church, making Patriarch Lukaris godfather of his son Cyril. Wych also collected antiquities for Endymion Porter during his residence. Although his successor Crow arrived in 1638, Wych was forced to continue as ambassador until Crow could be formally accredited to Porte on return of Murad IV from campaign; On return Wych became controller of the royal household and privy councillor. His return was marred by a dispute with the Company over rights of consulage which was left unresolved although Charles I reasserted crown right over consulage. He was a source of

finance for the royalist cause. He died December 1643.

SOURCES: BL Sloane MSS 856 f. 13; BL Egerton MSS 2541 f. 209; Howell: Ho-Eliauae pp. 325-6; Wood p. 88; Dorothea Townshend: The Life and Letters of Endymion Porter (London, 1897) p. 146; D.N.B.; Sarah Searight: 'The Turkey Merchants' History Today 16 (1966) p. 417

Sackville Crow (1639-47): He was born in Kent in 1600 and became a protégé of Buckingham, acting as his treasurer, 1624-28. In 1626, he was given license for making iron ordnance for life. He became a baronet in 1627. He was naval Treasurer from 1627-30 but was not very competent at the job and seems to have used it to make money - he owed £3005 to Admiralty by the end of his appointment. He promised to clear the debt through payments from farm of wine licences which he had been given by Charles I in 1637. He was appointed ambassador to the Porte in 1634 but his departure was delayed until 1638 while he argued with Company about the rights of strangers consulage. As a crown choice, with no experience of the Levant trade, he was unpopular with the merchants. He dealt mainly with commercial problems during his term of office. In 1646, on the king's orders, he ordered the seizure of merchants goods and money, imprisoning those who resisted. In retaliation, the merchants chose their own representative John Lancelot to replace him but Crow managed to regain his place (see above pp. NN). He was recalled at the beginning of 1647 but refused to acknowledge his successor, Bendish as legitimate and eventually had to be deported. He caused trouble when his ship stopped at Malaga, claiming that he was being returned to England to be tried as a Catholic. When he reached England, he was imprisoned in the Tower where he remained until 1656. He started legal proceedings against those responsible for his deportation and the Company and he were embroiled in continual disputes as the Company demanded compensation for the funds he had seized and the ships he had prevented loading cargoes. These quarrels lasted through the inter-regnum. In 1662, following the Restoration, he was given a licence for controlling the tapestry manufacture at Mortlake but he mismanaged this opportunity and ended up in the Fleet debtors prison in 1667. He became secretary and clerk of the signet of Wales and the Marches in 1671, becoming Lord Lieutenant of Carmarthenshire in 1674 but once again fell into debt and died insolvent in the Fleet prison in 1683.

SOURCES: BL Egerton MSS. 2533 f. 439; PRO SP105/144 f. 163-83; Roman Cizdyn: Monopolies p. 192; CSPV 1632-36 p. 292; CSPD 1636-7 p. 568; CSPD 1637 pp. 398, 438; Robert Ashton: 'The Disbursing Official' BIHR 30 (1957) pp. 167-74, p. 165; D.N.B. Missing

Persons (Oxford, 1993)

Thomas Bendish (1647-60): Baronet of Bower Hall, Steeple Bumpstead in Essex. In 1643, he was imprisoned in the Tower by the House of Commons for publishing a proclamation against the associating of counties by Parliament. His movements were restricted until 1646. Although he was a compromise candidate for the ambassadorship with letters patent from king and commission from Parliament, he was suspected of royalist sympathies by the Commonwealth authorities. They recalled him in 1652 but his replacement, a close associate of Cromwell, Richard Salway (see D.N.B.), could not replace him immediately. Richard Lawrence was sent out as an interim agent but Bendish would not allow him to be presented because he did not have sufficient power to deal with merchant business or renew the capitulations. When Salway asked to be relieved of the commission, Lawrence was recalled and Bendish was again fully accredited, serving until recalled by Charles II at the Restoration, this time on suspicion of Parliamentary sympathies. Bendish had the task of reorganising the English communities and removing the factionalism that was the legacy of his predecessor. He also had to protect the English from Venetian and Ottoman pressure during the Cretan war. He was involved in a project to provide Cromwell with Arab stallions, to be transported through Aleppo. He took his wife and children out to Constantinople, where his wife died of plague. His three daughters married Company members, one of his sons was drowned when his ship was attacked by the Venetians, while the other went on to serve in the East India Company. After Winchelsea failed to secure a position for him as agent in Cairo, Bendish returned to Bower Hall after the Restoration, where after a lengthy battle with the Company over his expenses, he died in 1674.

SOURCES: SP105/144 ff. 5-8, 124; BL Add. MSS. 40700 f. 135; Bodl. Rawl MSS. A 61 f. 244; E.R.O. D/DHf 04-050; HMC Finch I p. 100, 324; The Essex Notebook 11 (1885) p. 127; Fissel & Goffman: 'The Bendysh-Hyde Affair' p. 42; Wood p. 91

Heneage Finch, Earl of Winchelsea (1660-1668): Viscount of Maidstone, Baron Fitzherbert of Eastwell, Lord of the Royal Manor of Wye, Lord Lieutenant of the County of Kent and city of Canterbury. Winchelsea took the appointment of ambassador, hoping to earn enough

to clear his debts. He was a pragmatic man who won the favour of grand vizier Ahmet Köprülü, and renewed the capitulations dealing with security in the Mediterranean. He wanted to enlarge the role of the embassy at the Porte to that of an intelligence gathering centre but could not gain support for plan because of the expense it would involve. He continued Bendish's work in regulating the English communities to prevent a revival of the factionalism which had blighted their activities during the civil war.

SOURCE: HMC Finch I pp. vii-xxviii, 146, 314; Rycaut p. 1; Lachs: Diplomatic Service pp. 35-36

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